Sandwell
CHRONICLE

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BOMB HORROR: PLEDGE TO UNITE IN FIGHT AGAINST EVIL

Scene of terror for young concert goers

POLITICIANS from across the Black Country and Staffordshire have called for solidarity as they pledged their support for the victims of the latest terror attack to hit Britain.

The bombing at Manchester Arena was the worst terrorist atrocity in the UK for 12 years, leaving 22 people dead – including children – and many more injured.

All campaigning for the General Election was cancelled on Tuesday as parliamentary candidates reflected on what Government Chief Whip Gavin Williamson described as a barbaric attack motivated by hatred.

He said: "To see such a horrific attack that has targeted children and young people is dreadful beyond words. We always have to be vigilant to crush and destroy people who are out to bring destruction to our way of life. It leaves the whole nation reeling as we see the carnage that has been caused. Now is the time for us all to come together to support the people who have suffered the most.

Barbarity

"Our thanks go to the emergency services who have done such and amazing job. Let us hope our security services hunt down anyone else who may have been involved in the attack so they can be brought to justice.

Labour's deputy leader Tom Watson said: "I'm deeply shocked and very upset that innocent children have been targeted in this way. Manchester is a strong city and we in the Black Country express our solidarity and support for all the people who are dealing with the aftermath of this horrific attack. I know everyone in the Black Country will agree that we will never let these terrorists defeat us."

Labour's candidate for Stourbridge and Dudley councillor Pete Lowe, said: "All of my thoughts are with the victims.

"This is a reminder to all of us of the nature of the world we live in. In this attack we saw the very worst of humanity, but we also saw the very best in the way our emergency services and the staff at the arena rallied around to help."

● We wept for the victims – Page 5

Warning on enforcement action as cars remain

DRIVERS SNUB RED ROUTE PARKING BAN

DRIVERS are still parking along a Black Country road despite measures being enforced three weeks ago to tackle bad parking.

A red route was introduced on Forge Lane in Cradley Heath to clamp down on the issue. But drivers have been photographed still parking on the busy road, which is near to Cradley Heath railway station. Red routes prohibit motorists from stopping to park, load or offload goods.

The parking measure was brought in along the road stretches for a mile along Forge Lane, Lower High Street, Foxoak Street and Upper High Street.

It should deter drivers from parking along the road. But motorists have been snapped parked up along the street.

Councillor Caroline White, who represents the Cradley Heath and Old Hill ward, said: "We are aware of the issue and the enforcement team will be taking action on anyone parking along there still.

Alleviate

"The road is not far from the town centre and station and people park up to use it for there. But we will be opening a separate car park soon to alleviate the problems. This is something that we certainly will be enforcing, so drivers have been warned. I have not had any complaints personally about it in my ward yet."

Sandwell Council said it is enforcing the red route by deploying a CCTV camera car and patrols to try and catch motorists red-handed.

By Jamie Brassington

Residents say the measure is also causing problems for residents in nearby streets, as motorists are opting to park their cars on those streets instead. Twitter user @teamwolfpackuk tweeted: "As predicted, people are parking on New pool Road & Mouse Sweet walk, making it dangerous for residents."

Sandwell Council responded by tweeting that it will look at the 'impact' on neighbouring roads.

The local authority says the red lines aim to prevent parking on pavements and on narrow stretches of the road which causes problems for pedestrians and traffic.

Anyone caught parking on the red lines will receive a £70 fine in the post, reduced to £35 if paid within 14 days. The council has received multiple complaints about vehicles blocking pavements and preventing drivers from passing due to parked cars. The scheme is costing approximately £4,000 and old yellow lines were removed as part of the work.

Kork-ing tribute to a Dandy character

Charlie's son Steve next to the blue plaque at the school his father attended as a young boy

Charlie Grigg

ONE of Oldbury's most-loved and well-known characters, cartoonist Charlie Grigg, has been posthumously honoured with a plaque at his old school in the town.

Relatives of the illustrator for comics such as The Dandy and Beano, attended Rood End Primary School wherer a special ceremony of celebration took place.

Charlie became one of the country's most-renowned comic illustrators, both in postcards and characters such as Korky the Kat.

● Unveiled – Page 2

TRIBUTE

'Wonderful son' was victim of M5 tragedy

A MAN described as a 'wonderful son' has been named as the victim who was killed when he was hit by a coach on the M5.

Nicholas Mowl, aged 41, was hit on the M5 southbound between junction one and the link with Junction 8 of M6 at Great Barr last Tuesday and was confirmed dead at the scene. There were 31 people on the coach, who were assessed for the effects of shock.

Nicholas Mowl

Today a tribute from the family described Mr Mowl as a 'wonderful son, brother and uncle who was loved so much'. Police appealed for anyone who had spoken to the victim, to get in touch on the 101 line.

HOMES

Most affordable for first buyers

SANDWELL and Dudley are the most affordable parts of the West Midlands for first-time buyers, according to new research.

Sandwell was found to be the cheapest area, when average property prices and salaries in the borough were compared, followed closely by Dudley.

David Sharples, mortgage broker at Search Mortgage Solutions, which conducted the study, said: "Affordability can differ considerably when looking just a short distance apart."

ROADS

Top 10 of worst potholes in region

THE worst potholes across Staffordshire and the Black Country have been highlighted to highways authorities thanks to Chronicle readers. We invited readers to send pictures and details of some of the troublespots being endured by motorists on our road network.

The most damaged roads and worst craters have been identified and passed on to local councils to prioritise. Two of the top three have been identified now for major works in the summer and repairs have been carried out on at least two others.

● Full story and top 10 – Page 4

INSIDE

BEN PUTS BEST FEET FORWARD

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Crowds are drawn to tribute for Dandy cartoonist

The audience gather at Charlie's old school Rood End Primary

Charlie's son Steve with Brian Dakin at the special event

Plaque in honour of Charlie Grigg unveiled

A PLAQUE to honour a renowned man, who illustrated The Dandy and Beano for more than 20 years, has been unveiled.

Charlie Grigg, from Oldbury, a comic that was published for 75 years, loved drawing from the age of six and quickly became one of the nation's most celebrated comic cartoonists.

He was also behind the design of Dandy's Korky the Kat for more than 20 years, the iconic Desperate Dan and a host of other sketches.

He died aged 97 on December 4, 2013, but his long career will be remembered for his iconic drawings.

Writer and performer, Dr Brian Dakin, otherwise known as Billy Spakemon, began looking for the Rood End-born artist to be finally given the 'recognition he deserves' and launched a campaign to for the blue plaque to be made in honour.

Celebration

He contacted at headteacher at Mr Grigg's old school, Rood End Primary School, to start discussions about the idea of a plaque, which were later welcomed.

More than 200 people gathered at the school in Langley on Saturday for the long-awaited celebration event – which saw some of Charlie's relatives officially unveil the special plaque.

Charlie took over drawing the cover for The Dandy on January 20, 1962, working there for the next 22 years, with 21 of those illustrating all the Dandy Annual Covers.

In 1951, he went full-time eventually working for D C Thomson, home of the Dandy and Beano.

Mr Dakin said the celebration event was 'absolutely amazing'.

He said: "We had about 200 people turn up to the event at the school.

"It was absolutely amazing.

"People from all over the country came to the school for the unveiling.

"When everyone saw the plaque for the first time it was magical – the school even had to stay open an extra half hour because everyone was taking pictures next to the plaque.

"We raised nearly £900 which helped pay for the plaque.

"It was initially a milestone but now it's almost like a stepping stone now as the project is beginning to expand and we have more ideas to celebrate Charlie's life in the pipeline.

"It's been a complete and utter joy to be involved."

He added: "Charlie Grigg was such an important man, and his contribution to the youth culture of a generation was incredible. He created all of these iconic cartoons, but did it all without leaving Langley.

"His work is known all over the world, and so he should be recognised as the man behind the brilliant sketches of Dandy."

Born in November 1916, Charles Grigg was the son of a railway fitter and following family tradition, he began an apprenticeship at Smethwick's Railway Carriage and Wagon Works.

He then moved to Hope's glassworks in Smethwick, but his love of drawing and being encouraged by his mother and brother saw him going to night school at West Bromwich and realised his artistic talents could earn him some extra income.

He did cartoons for the Evening Despatch and created Rufus the Rabbit for the Oldbury Weekly News and Billy Bone for the Smethwick Telephone.

Mr Dakin said future plans are in the pipeline to release a book celebrating Charlie's life, along with a possible art exhibition featuring his endless work in the Sandwell borough.

Charlie, at the road sign of his childhood

A view of the plaque, including some cartoon favourites

All aboard as Graham Taylor special takes to the tracks

A TRAIN serving Wolverhampton will be named after former Wolves and England boss Graham Taylor, it has been announced. The London Midland Class 350 train will be 'Graham Taylor OBE' for its entire working life.

It will also serve Watford and Aston, where Taylor managed football clubs, as well as Wembley Central and Lichfield Trent Valley, which is near St George's Park where England train.

Taylor managed Wolves from March 1994 to November 1995.

He almost led them to promotion in his one full season in charge, with Wolves losing in the play-offs to Bolton, and is widely regarded as having been one of football's gentlemen.

He died on January 12 of a suspected heart attack. Steve Helfet, head of West Coast services at London Midland, said: "Graham played such an influential role at football clubs across the length and breadth of the country.

"The train will be fitted with a commemorative name plate and will be running past many of the locations that were so important in Graham's career, both on the West Coast main line and in the West Midlands."

The train operator will be holding an unveiling ceremony at Watford Junction station on June 2. The ceremony, being held on Platform 10 of Watford Junction station, will include short speeches and music performed by a string quartet.

After the ceremony, signed football memorabilia used in the unveiling will be auctioned for charity.

1908 Cup medal sells for £8,000

A 1908 FA Cup final winner's medal presented to the then Wolves captain has sold at auction for £8,000.

The 15 carat gold medal, handed to Billy Wooldridge after Wolves' 3-1 win over Newcastle, went under the hammer in London. It had been estimated to fetch between £6,000 and £8,000.

The medal is in a good condition and an engraving on the back features the skipper's name. It had belonged to Shirley Burn, from Lichfield, who said she bought it from Wooldridge's grandson in 1979.

After Mrs Burn's husband died in 1994 she loaned it to Wolves and it was held at the club museum for 21 years. Wooldridge, born in Netherton in 1878. made 356 appearances for Wolves, scoring 90 goals in 12 years.

Teddy bear talk for history society

Clent History Society holds its open meeting today at 8pm when Dr Gillian White will be giving a talk on teddy bears at Clent Parish Hall, Church Avenue, Clent.

Dr White has been curator of Warwickshire Museum and Hardwick Hall.

Special day arranged in memory of referee Joel

A DAY of 'celebration and reflection' will be held in memory of Tunisia terror victim Joel Richards.

Birmingham County Football Association, which Joel served as a referee, will hold the event at its base in Ray Hall Lane on May 27.

Joel was killed aged 19 in Tunisia in 2015 alongside his uncle Adrian Evans and grandfather Patrick Evans.

He was a high-achieving young match official, who was also actively involved in a number of areas of the grassroots game across Birmingham.

He also served as chairman of the Birmingham County FA's Youth Council, which provided a voice for young people in the region on the development of the game at local level.

On the day of celebration, a headline match will take place in the afternoon, which will see friends, family and colleagues of Joel take part to celebrate his life and work in the grassroots game.

Entry will be made by donation, with all money raised going straight into the Joel Richards Foundation Legacy Fund.

The Joel Richards Foundation Legacy Fund was set up in memory of Joel, and is a bursary that provides local young coaches, referees and volunteers with funds that aid development.

On last year's event, Kirsty Dixon, chairman of the Birmingham County FA Youth Council, said:

"We were overwhelmed with the support from individuals and raised over £700. It was great to see the huge

Rebecca's father hosts music tent

THE father of a young woman who died after being hit by a speeding sports car is hosting an acoustic music tent in memory of his daughter.

Gerard McManus will organise the venue for the Warley in the Woods event on July 2 to host to acoustic musicians.

His daughter Rebecca, from Oldbury, a former Stourbridge A-level student, was 21 when she was struck by a car as she waited at a bus stop on the Hagley Road in Bearwood.

She was a promising poet who had just completed an English Literature and Creative Writing degree at the University of East Anglia.

Mr McManus said: "Rebecca was passionate about music and she really enjoyed live performances."

Revenue is up for hotels chain

MILLENNIUM & Copthorne Hotels, which includes the Copthorne Hotel in Brierley Hill, saw revenue rise by 16.1 per cent to £223m in its first quarter to the end of March. The hotel is near Merry Hill shopping centre.

Award for police who helped drugs man

SIX police officers who saved the life of a man who sliced off his own nose while high on drug Black Mamba have been awarded.

The officers were called to an address in Newtown, Birmingham on October 12.

They found the man, who was experiencing an extreme psychotic episode after taking synthetic cannabis, with blood pouring from a severe facial injury. He had cut off part of his nose with a kitchen knife and had also mutilated other parts of his body.

Pc Thomas Walker and a colleague were first on the scene and battled for almost 30 minutes to subdue the man while trying to stem the blood loss.

Sergeant Jonathan Rattenbury and Pc colleagues Lewis Williams, Chloe Morgan, Harry Matharu also arrived to help restrain the man and carry him down three flights of stairs to the waiting ambulance.

Birmingham Police Inspector Mat Minton, said: "I believe the actions of these officers saved the man's life. They were met with the sight of someone who'd mutilated himself and was outwardly displaying hostility and aggression towards them. They had to deal with that while trying to provide emergency first aid. It's hard to imagine how challenging that scene must have been for the officers who first attended – they did a brilliant job.

"Sergeant Rattenberry later described it as a bloodbath and the most gruesome scene he's encountered in 26 years police service."

The man went on to recover in hospital and has since been receiving specialist support.

West Midlands Police has recently joined forces with a drug referral agency in a push to raise awareness of the devastating effects of Black Mamba and to protect members of the homeless community who are being targeted by dealers.

Birmingham Police Superintendent Andy Parsons, added: "Some people are still viewing Black Mamba as a low-risk drug substitute and are taking it without any consideration for their safety. But our view is that there is no safe way to use Spice or Mamba.

"The reality is that these psychoactive substances can have catastrophic effects."

More jobless claiming benefits in Sandwell

THE number of people claiming unemployment benefits in the Sandwell borough rose last month.

It came after the unemployment total in the West Midlands fell by 5,000 to 161,000 in the three months to March.

Nationally the unemployment rate fell to a 42-year low with a record number of people in work, Office for National Statistics figures show. Those claiming in Sandwell, including Jobseeker's Allowance and Universal Credit, were up 50 on March to 5,925 – 3.1 per cent of the working population.

Warley parliamentary candidate John Spellar said: "I think this is a reflection of the number of closures that have taken place in the area in recent months, as well as uncertainty in manufacturing which the area has been so dependent on.

"We've had some very big closures with British Gas and the announcement from 2 Sisters as well. It shows the importance of getting employment into the area. I hope to work with the council and the Black Country LEP in order to get work back into Sandwell."

Wolverhampton saw a rise of 145 to 7,100 and its rate of 4.4 per cent is the second highest in the West Midlands behind Birmingham, where 32,570 are claiming, at 4.6 per cent.

Lowest

Dudley rose by 45 to 5,925 (3.1 per cent), but Walsall bucked the trend with a fall of 10 to 5,095 (three per cent).

The UK jobless total fell by 53,000 to 1.54 million in the quarter, a rate of 4.6 per cent, the lowest since summer 1975. The West Midlands rate is 5.7 per cent. The number claiming unemployment benefits was up in the region last month by 1,035 to 89,060 - 2.5 per cent of the working population.

The national employment figure increased by 122,000 to almost 32 million, the highest since records began in 1971.

Prime Minister Theresa May said: "Today's employment figures show that our credible economic policies are continuing to deliver greater economic security for families."

Average earnings increased by 2.4 per cent in the year to March, just 0.1 per cent up on the previous month and below the latest CPI inflation rate of 2.7 per cent. Nationally the number of people on the claimant count rose by 19,400 to 792,800, mainly because of an increase in those on Universal Credit.

Arson-hit Smethwick pub is no more

Where the New navigation Inn used to be on Lewisham Road, Smethwick, before it was demolished

A CRUMBLING 'dangerous' Smethwick pub has finally been demolished following fears it could have collapsed.

Sandwell Council launched legal action against the New Navigation pub's owners last week after it had stood in a state disrepair and been targeted by vandals and arsonists in recent months.

Demolition work got underway last Thursday after the council's highways department said that the junction at Bridge Street North with Lewisham Road and Downing Street would be closed until Sunday.

The crumbling pub

By Saturday only rubble was left on the site, with fencing in place around the outside.

The pub had been sealed off since January due to safety concerns and temporary traffic lights were put in place to stop vehicles passing too close to the building.

Sandwell Council had to spend £2,000 on the traffic measures.

Ward councillor Preet Gill, cabinet member for public health and protection, said: "We've been working with the landlord of the pub for some time to get something done because we were concerned about safety."

Before the demolition, the eyesore building, which had dozens of cracks running through it, was engulfed in flames earlier this year after a blaze on January 2, attended by 23 firefighters.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Brothers brew Cornell tribute

A PAIR of Black Country brewing brothers have created a new ale in tribute to the late American rock star Chris Cornell. The singer with US bands Soundgarden and Audioslave died last Wednesday aged 52.

James and Thomas Fownes, of Fownes Brewing Company were fans of his and have launched a red American pale ale called By Crooked Steps, a Soundgarden song title. £10 from the sale of each cask will go to charity CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably), dedicated to preventing male suicide.

Man arrested in crackdown

A MAN was arrested for immigration offences following a traffic operation in Tipton.

The man was arrested after his car was pulled over due to a defect.

Meanwhile one vehicle was seized for having no insurance.

Another driver was fined for speeding.

The operation was conducted in partnership with West Midlands Fire Service, Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency, traffic police officers, the Home Office's Immigration Enforcement and supermarket chain Asda.

Man jailed for road tragedy

A MAN has been jailed for his part in a motorcycle crash which killed a 37-year-old Black Country man.

Philip Gray, from Oldbury, was killed when two motorcycles collided on the A5 in Fazeley, near Tamworth, on November 20, 2015.

Steven Porton, aged 29, of Boulevard Walk, Walsall, was subsequently charged and later convicted of a charge of dangerous driving. He was given a 12-month jail term and handed a 42-month driving ban.

Music courses are among the best

MUSIC and acting courses at Birmingham Conservatoire have been recognised as among the best on offer in the UK.

The Guardian's University Guide for 2018 ranked the Conservatoire's drama degree courses fourth out of 87 institutions, while music courses were ranked fifth out of 81 institutions.

The tables illustrate Birmingham Conservatoire, part of Birmingham City University, received a high score for student satisfaction.

Charity walk appeal

A FIRST-YEAR student at the University of Birmingham who this week was embarking on a charity walk from the second city to Aldershot is appealing for donations. Rachel Baker, 18, is studying drama and theatre studies. To donate, search for 'Rach-vs-thebighill' on justgiving.com

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COUNTY NEWS

Woman in 101 call to report cat

A WOMAN rang police to complain that a cat was meowing outside her front door. Now West Midlands Police has launched a campaign to encourage people to be responsible when they call the force.

On social media they are using the hashtag #ThinkBeforeYouCall to spread the message.

This week the force has shared examples of such calls. And police are reminding members of the public that these increase queuing time for those who have a more serious matter to report.

Firms could save £27m on water

FIGURES released by Utilitywise have revealed that firms in the Midlands could collectively save as much as £27 million on their water bills.

This follows deregulation of the water market in England, giving business owners the chance to renegotiate their existing water contracts or look to a new supplier.

Around 164,000 businesses in the Midlands now have control over who supplies their water, giving the local water market a value of approximately £276m. The water market in England is now valued at £2bn.

Thousands prepare to mark Ramadan

THOUSANDS of Muslims across the region are preparing for the religious festival, Ramadan with a month of prayer and fasting.

This year Ramadan starts on May 27 and will finish on June 24, both Saturdays.Following this, on June 25, Muslims will celebrate Eid al-Fitr which is often known as just Eid.

This celebration, which is to be held on June 25, marks the end of the Ramadan fasting and the start of the next month, Shawwal.

Sex abuse charities get £75,000 boost

A CHARITY that helps victims of sexual exploitation in the Black Country has received a £75,000 cash boost.

Walsall-based Street Teams has been donated the five-figure sum from Lloyds Bank Foundation, one of the country's leading grant makers.

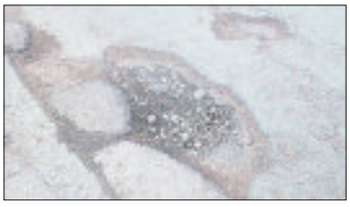
It will help the charity's Transition Project, which helps support young adults at risk of exploitation, grooming and trafficking by providing one-to-one help in a range of practical issues including housing and benefits.

Teddy bear tales

CLENT History Society holds its open meeting on May 25 when Dr Gillian White will be giving a talk on teddy bears, at 8pm in Clent Parish Hall, Church Avenue, Clent.

Dr White has been curator of the Warwickshire Museum and of the National Trust property, Hardwick Hall.

Readers drive home point over crumbling routes


The road surface in Buchanan Avenue, Walsall

A picture showing the problems in Stourbridge

Problems highlighted in Station Road, Wombourne

Worst potholes on our roads revealed

TOP OF THE POTS

WE knew the state of the roads in the Black Country and Staffordshire was bad – we just didn't realise how bad!

When The Chronicle launched its campaign to highlight the most pothole-ridden roads in our region in order that they should get priority for repairs, we were already aware of a few trouble spots.

But we have been inundated with emails, reports and pictures of some shocking holes endured by drivers on a daily basis.

Based on the number of reports and looking at the pictures readers have sent us, we have compiled a top 10 of what we believe are the worst roads for potholes in our area. The most complaints we received were regarding roads in Staffordshire taking six of the top ten spots.

Hill Top at Hednesford was reported to us by a number of people and pictures showed a succession of potholes all around these busy islands and the roads which approach it. Reader Paul Gill sent us one picture where fresh road markings had been painted over the potholes with a large dip in one line as it sank into a hole.

Reporting

Carlisle Road on the Longford Estate in Cannock, was flagged up by locals and a number of pictures submitted. Resident Sandra McLeod said: "The whole length of the road is riddled with bad potholes."

Five Ways Island in nearby Heath Hayes was flagged up as having 38 separate outstanding complaints about the state of the road surface.

There were several complaints about the A449 along its length through Kingswinford. One reader, Jo Well, complained: "There is a strong possibility of an accident on this busy, fast road as drivers swerve to avoid them."

Many readers complained about the state of the A460 from the motorway island for junction 11 of the M6 heading into Cannock. Wombourne was flagged up by a number of readers as having crumbling roads, particularly around Station Road, while Pattingham was also highlighted.

In addition we received shocking pictures of small craters on roads in Stourbridge, Walsall and Wolverhampton. Roads in Great Wyrley and Rugeley also featured regularly.

The Chronicle has taken the results to the relevant councils and there is good news for local people. A programme of work to resurface the roads and replace damaged kerbstones as part of a £240,000 investment is to take place at Hill Top, with work due to get under way this August.

Similarly, significant work is planned for the Five Ways Island with a five-week project due to start in July.

And work has already taken place to repair some of the potholes and damage on the A460/M6 junction 11 island since the Chronicle readers initially flagged up the problems.

Staffordshire's highways chief Mark Deaville said: "We have to prioritise pothole repairs where they pose the biggest risk to members of the public and are currently finalising our programme of repairs for the next 12 months to ensure it delivers the maximum benefits with the budget available."

Alan Lunt, strategic director for place directorate at Dudley Council, said: "We have a robust system in place with inspection teams who identify road defects such as potholes, with the most severe cases highlighted for urgent attention. Clearly, we have to prioritise the most serious problems above others but we are working to deal with as many as we can."

Walsall Council said: "We were aware of the repairs required at Buchanan Avenue and have undertaken pothole repairs with a Velocity Patcher. We can confirm that there is no longer any significant damage outstanding in the area."

Wolverhampton Council has not yet responded.

Did your road make it in our worst potholes list?

The Chronicle's Top 10:

- Hill Top, Hednesford – works beginning in August
- Carlisle Road, Longford Estate, Cannock – no date set
- Five Ways Island, Heath Hayes – works beginning in July
- A449 through Kingswinford – 'added to future programme of work'
- A460/M6 junction 11 island and surrounding area – repairs now carried out
- Station Road and surrounding area, Wombourne – no date set
- High Street, Pattingham – no date set
- Romsley Road, Stourbridge – 'action as soon as possible'
- Buchanan Avenue, Walsall – repaired
- Wergs Hall Road, Wolverhampton – no response

Hill Top, Hednesford, riddled with potholes

A copy of the E&S in a Wergs Hall Road pothole

Five Ways island in Heath Hayes, Cannock

Bus firm in donation of £300 to help homeless

A BUS firm has raised more than £300 for a Birmingham-based youth homelessness charity with more to come this year.

National Express West Midlands raised the money for charity St Basil's. The bus operator's head office, which has more than 150 employees based in Bordesley, selected St Basil's as its community partner for 2017. It will now focus its charitable efforts on raising as much money as possible for the charity this year.

Staff at Bordesley recently held a Bake Off event, with tasty treats being sold off and resulting in £304 in donations to support young people in Birmingham.

Rachael Ashford, HR coordinator at National Express West Midlands, said: "National Express West Midlands is proud to be part of the communities that we serve and we're delighted to have launched our community partnership with St Basil's."

Barrie Hodge, head of fundraising and communications at St Basil's, said: "We are delighted that National Express West Midlands has chosen to support us as their local community partner.

"Our work focuses on making the lives of young people in the communities we serve better."

In addition to the community partnership with the bus operator's Bordesley office, St Basil's has been successful in securing a £2,500 community grant from the National Express Foundation, the transport operator's own registered UK charity.

Arrests over smoke bombs

NINE people have been arrested at football league games involving West Midland teams over smoke bombs this season. Incidents include two smoke bombs in the game between Walsall and Charlton in August last year. No-one was arrested.

Smoke bombs were let off at Walsall games against Sheffield United and Swindon. No smoke bombs were reported let off at the Molineux, but one went off at Aston Villa's Villa Park for the home games against Wolves.

One person was arrested.

At Albion's The Hawthorns, one person was arrested in connection with a smoke bomb against Derby County, and another against Everton. Three people were arrested in connection with smoke bombs at Birmingham City over last season.

Make a date for the biggest nostalgia fair

A FESTIVAL of nostalgia and memories will make up the Black Country's largest history fair next month.

The Penn History Fair is at the United Reform Church, 333 Penn Road, on June 9, from 10am to 8pm and on June and 10 from 9am to 4pm.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
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YOU MAY BE AWARE THAT SANDWELL COUNCIL ARE OFFERING FAMILIES A VERY BASIC FUNERAL SERVICE AT A COST OF £1595. WHEN WE AT HENLEY FUNERAL DIRECTORS WHO ARE THE ONLY FAMILY OWNED & RUN FUNERAL DIRECTORS IN THE SMETHWICK AND OLDBURY AREA WHO OFFER A MUCH SUPERIOR AND PERSONAL SERVICE FOR £1395
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Sandwell

First summit of Street's task force on homeless

THE first meeting has taken place of a task force set up by West Midlands Mayor Andy Street to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in towns and cities across the region.

The Mayor's Homelessness Task Force gathered for the first time on Friday and includes Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson and West Midlands Police Assistant Chief Constable Alex Murray.

It includes national and regional charities such as St Basil's, the Royal British Legion, SIFA Fireside, Langar Aid, Emmaus Coventry, and Dudley-based CHADD. It also features representatives from housing groups, local authorities and business organisations – including Colmore Business Improvement District – in recognition of the different solutions.

The focus of the group first is to oversee a dramatic reduction in the levels of rough sleeping but with a focus on the underlying issues.

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, said: "The message that came back from people I spoke to on the election campaign was that they want the Mayor to tackle the issue of rough sleeping. Frankly, it's a situation that shames us as a region. I was very grateful for everyone's commitment today and I feel confident that by working together we can make a difference."

Among the ideas being suggested is an alternative giving system which would enable members of the public to donate to organisations which prevent rough sleeping.

Firm donates buddy bench

A RETIREMENT housebuilder has donated a buddy bench to Hagley Primary School in order to help foster friendship on the playground.

The brightly coloured buddy bench, given by McCarthy and Stone, is designed to promote mental wellbeing.

Robert Monkman, who is the regional sales and marketing director at McCarthy and Stone, said: "We understand all too well how important it is for people of any age to feel a sense of belonging, and to have a friend they can talk to.

"The buddy bench is an example of the many ways in which we can help to bring people together and we hope that the children of Hagley Primary School continue to develop long-lasting friendships from the bench."

Sharapova to play tennis in Brum

MARIA Sharapova will be returning to Birmingham next month after being handed a wildcard into the Aegon Classic at the Edgbaston Priory Club by the Lawn Tennis Association. The Russian – a five-time Grand

Firm has just the ticket for community

Radoslaw Rajewski, Amanda Win-

NATIONAL Express West Midlands has launched a community partnership with Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals Trust.

The bus operator's West Bromwich garage, which has over 500 employees, selected the Trust as its local community partner and is focusing its charitable efforts on supporting them with events during the course of the year.

Staff and drivers are also being encouraged to take part in various fundraising activities to raise much needed funds towards the cost of equipment needed to treat and care for babies and young people in the local area.

John Coulson, of National Express West Midlands said: "We are delighted to launch our partnership with Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospital Trust."

Amanda Winwood, for the trust, said: "We are very much looking forward to being able to provide additional items that will enhance the patient's journey with us. Once again our community consistently demonstrate their willingness to help those in hospital." The Trust, based at Sandwell General Hospital, works in partnership with local stakeholders to raise vital funds for services at City Hospital, Sandwell General Hospital, Rowley Regis Community Hospital and Leasowes Intermediate Care Centre. A new Midland Metropolitan Hospital in Smethwick will also be opening in October 2018.

National Express West Midlands' West Bromwich garage operates a number of bus routes including the 82, 87 and 89 to City Hospital, the 5, 40, 45 and 46 to Sandwell General Hospital, the 289 to Rowley Regis

We wept for them, both with sadness and relief

Why Manchester bomb horror was too close to home for DIANE DAVIES

AS literally hundreds of parents waited in the foyer of Genting Arena, we were hit by a sudden tidal wave of excited teenage girls.

At the head of the pack of schoolgirl 'clones' was my beaming daughter and her friend delighted at their nifty escape from the sold-out arena. Almost hoarse from singing and shouting they regaled every detail of the Ariana Grande show, totally in awe of the US singer.

That was less than a week ago and it was Birmingham. At that very point at the end of the gig in Manchester, as thousands more teenage girls and gig-goers were greeted by their waiting parents, a bomb went off.

The devastation, terror and bloodshed that caused is unbearable. My daughter's friend and her mother were both in tears as the news broke – as were we.

We wept for the victims killed and maimed by some evil lunatic who deliberately targeted the young and innocent simply enjoying a night of music. We wept for their families whose lives were torn apart by the slaughter that night.

Evil

But secretly, almost ashamedly, we wept a little for ourselves, relief that this time it was Manchester not Birmingham and that I left that venue with two happy, young girls.

How anyone could stand among those throngs of beautiful young people, see their smiling faces, and then detonate a lethal bomb is incomprehensible. That is an act of pure evil, no religion or cause would condone this sadistic murder of children.

I, like many other parents, have questioned whether or not I would allow my teenage daughter to go to shows like this again. If asked whether these cowardly acts of terrorism would stop me going to gigs, absolutely not. The terrorists will not win.

But will I still let my daughter go? Still raw from the horror of Manchester, I am not so sure. I asked my daughter if she would still want to see Ariana or anyone else in concert again. She said: "Definitely."

We are all a bit scaredbut if my daughter refuses to give in to terrorists then neither will I!

Red sky at night is a pure delight

The stunning skyscape with the amazing reds, yellows and oranges of the sunset, taken by Simon Lea

THIS stunning shot makes the sky seem like it is on fire as it shows the sunset across Sandwell.

Taken by photographer Simon Lea in Warley Woods, Bearwood, it showed the brisk change in weather following downpours last week.

Mr Lea posted it on his Facebook page and it received more than 300 likes and 20 shares.

He called it 'Bearwood burning Sunset over the meadow at Warley Woods'.

Facebook follower Gill Roberts said: "The more I look at it, the more serene it seems to become even though it's a fire!"

NEWS IN BRIEF

Invitation to big picnic at park

The scene at last year's event

FAMILIES are invited to a fantastic day out at the Sandwell Families Big Picnic this half-term.

The picnic, which attracted hundreds of children, parents and carers, is on Thursday June 1 by the children's play area in Dartmouth Park, West Bromwich from 11am until 3pm.

This is the eighth annual picnic hosted by Sandwell Council's Family Information Service and promises to be bigger and better than previous years. Families are asked to bring a picnic along and join in with the free activities on offer including face painting, the animal man, arts and crafts, sports activities plus much more.

For details on the picnic and for other activities go to www.discoversandwell.co.uk or call 0121 569 4914.

Students unveiling tribute to police

WOLVERHAMPTON students will unveil a renovated memorial garden in honour of fallen police officers.

A group of 10 students from City of Wolverhampton College created the tribute at Smethwick police station for officers who lost their lives.

As part of their 12-week Prince's Trust self-development programme, the students spent a fortnight renovating the garden at the Piddock Road premises and raising money for a new plaque.

As part of the fundraising, they held bag-packs in shops and raised more than £800.

Popular car boot sale looks set to continue

A popular car boot sale looks set to continue after a council applied for permission to use a car park for another year.

The sales have been held on the Sandwell Council car park on Dudley Road, Oldbury, for the last year and have been a success.

The event became a regular fixture on Sundays following a trial period.

The council has now lodged a request to use the car park for the events for another 12 months.

Video driver fined

A TAXI driver was pulled over by police who spotted a video playing on his dashboard-mounted phone while a mother and child were on board.

The driver was fined £50 after he was stopped in Wolverhampton Road, Oldbury. A tweet from @Bhamtaxicop, said: "Horrified to see this professional driver using this with a mother and toddler on board."

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Why is the old £1 coin taking a pounding

DISCOVERED any of the old paper £5 notes in your wallets or purses in the past week or two?

You will no doubt know they are no longer legal tender, and will have to be exchanged at the bank. It will be the same with the old, round £1 coins. While half the country's vending machines and parking meters do not seem to be ready for the new, multi-sided coins, we will still be expected to dispense with the old coins by October.

But why the indecent haste? The new fiver only entered circulation in September, yet in less than eight months it has become currency non-grata. The new pound coin has only been with us a few weeks, yet there seems to be a real hurry to get rid of them.

When the original pound coin was introduced in 1983, the old £1 note continued to be legal tender for another five years, allowing it to gradually be phased out without any inconvenience. I can't see any reason why they can't do the same today.

❒❒❒

THERE are many, many things on which I disagree with Jeremy Corbyn – giving children the vote for a start – but when it comes to hospital parking charges, he is spot on.

Having spent the past six weeks making twice-daily visits to a seriously ill loved, the experience was traumatic enough, without being fleeced over parking.

For most of that time I parked on a housing estate across the road, probably to the chagrin of residents. Well sorry folks, but I always took care to park legally and considerately.

Anyway, had I not done this, it would have cost me £4.60 every time, or £9.20 a day. That's just over £285 a month, the cost of a small mortgage. Or to put it another way, it is more than half the basic state pension.

Who has got that sort of money? Apart from the bigwigs who come up with ideas like this, of course.

❒❒❒

HOW to get people out to vote. Last week a leaflet came through the door for one of the candidates in my constituency, urging us not to worry about national politics, but to judge him on his record locally.

"The vote here will have no impact on the national picture," he says in his leaflet. Which I think roughly translates as "don't worry, the other side are going to win anyway."

Having known the gentleman in question for well over 20 years, I would agree that he is extremely hard-working and committed to his constituents.

But something is very wrong when a politician's election battle-cry is that a vote for him won't make any difference to how the country is run.

Political ramblings starting to reach a crescendo

Tony Blair in 1997, but how much did his victory have to do with his hunting ban pledge?

Is it a hare, or is it a Leprechaun? Answers on a postcard to....(not really!)

Jeremy Corbyn, denoting his A-level passes, all two of them. Yes, maths not a strong point

Will May be foxed in her hunt for power?

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

"THE proverb that money does not buy you happiness is a lie put about by the rich to stop the poor killing them." Sir Michael Caine, as quoted this week by Max Hastings.

THERESA May says she supports fox hunting and would allow a free vote in Parliament on repealing the hunting ban. Big mistake. Hunting is a pastime enjoyed by only a few thousand people yet it offends millions. Successive opinion polls show that a majority of Britons – even in rural areas – are opposed to it. And while it is not something that would swing an election result alone, it is an issue which persuades people who might otherwise not vote to go to the polling station and vote against it.

HUNTING probably played a part in Tony Blair's 1997 landslide victory when Labour's manifesto included a promise to ban it. It certainly affected the Wolverhampton South West result where the lifelong hunter and Tory grandee Nick Budgen lost his seat to the passionately anti-hunt Jenny Jones. It was a surprising result (not least to Jones who resigned after just one term in the Commons). I was there at the count and will never forget the exultation as Labour's majority of 5,118 was announced. I wrote at the time: "As the feely-huggy brigade cheered Jenny Jones, a great roar went up, like a pack baying at the kill. And they reflected on how easily they had flushed out and culled the fox-hunting barrister in Wolverhampton South West. Tallyho." Cold logic tells us that the fate of a small furry predator should not influence great affairs of state. But it does, and by supporting the hunt Theresa May is risking millions of votes.

ISRAEL has released covert footage of a Palestinian hunger striker allegedly eating biscuits and sweets in his cell. I am reminded of a reader some years ago who solemnly informed me that, all other tactics having failed, he was going on hunger strike to pursue a grievance with his local council. Three hours later he rang to say he had called it off. Had he forced the council to back down? "No," he explained. "I was bloody famished."

A FORMER comrade of the hate preacher Anjem Choudary is reported to have returned from Syria to the UK where he is working as a pizza delivery rider. Hell, this is serious. In the great scheme of things, I bet far more lardy-arse Britons are killed every year by take-away pizza than by terrorism. Double-thick, special greasy 12-incher with extra spicy sausage for the infidel at No 33.

WALKING down the lane, I spotted a little chap not more than two feet tall with his arms folded. We studied each other, 100 yards apart. He turned out to be a hare standing on his back legs, and I've never seen any animal looking quite so human. I wonder if that's where leprechaun sightings came from.

THIS is the time of year when male pheasants – sometimes called the poor man's peacock – emerge in the greatest glory. They are as stately as an ibis, as richly hued as a bird of paradise and far better behaved than peacocks. We have one peacock in the garden at Chateau Rhodes who comes to the window with his harem of five hens and taps on the pane to be fed. Every human who sees him is bowled over by his iridescent plumage and dramatic scarlet wattles. The mystery is that his rather drab mates seem totally unimpressed by his display. His most dazzling courtship display is met by their utter indifference. Some weeks from now the chicks will appear. I often wonder how.

PREACHING the benefits of an inquiring mind, Jeremy Corbyn says: "I don't consider myself the world's greatest intellectual but you learnt from everybody, don't close your mind to the thoughts of others." Pity he didn't follow that mantra in his schooldays. Corbyn was a privileged pupil but despite the benefits of a prep school and grammar school, he achieved only two dismal E-grade passes in his A -levels. Like he says, not the world's greatest intellectual.

AND while we're on it, why this 1950s-style obsession with nationalising the railways and squeezing the banks until the pips squeak? Half the population hardly ever uses a train and how many of us even know a single investment banker, let alone blame him for our ills? If Really Old Labour wants my vote (and such a thing is not impossible), then get a grip on the dodgiest sector of them all. Nationalise the entire insurance industry with its mega-rich bosses, phony competition, utter contempt for loyal customers and endless payouts to 'whiplash victims' who are no such thing. Dozens of firms are selling identical policies with premiums vastly inflated to cover the cost of celebrity advertising and stuffed toys. Sweep it all away, create the British Insurance Authority, eliminate the industrial-scale corruption and give us proper insurance, for the people, by the people. Or is that too radical, Jez?

AS I'm on holiday this week, I'd be grateful if you would hold those emails for a few days. Especially you three-a-day correspondents. You know who you are.

TALKING POINT

I'm voting green, in the garden of course

GRIPPED by election fever? Thought not. I haven't been either.

Until, that is, I had 'visitors' the other evening and I suddenly had a rather good idea.

Why don't we, the electorate, offer up our own manifesto in place of all the waffle the political parties are inflicting on us? Let me explain.

There I was, out in the back garden, doing a bit of early evening weeding when . . . Ding-Dong.

Off come the gardening gloves and dusty old boots, and off I go to see who's at the door.

Trouble is, by the time I've traipsed through the house, all I can see is a group of them disappearing round the corner before I can even get to the front door.

They being half a dozen 'political' types who are obviously calling at as many homes as they can, simply to find out who the occupants intend to vote for. And how did I know they were canvassing for votes? Because two, yes two, party leaflets were on the mat in the porch. Such an impersonal calling card, I'm sure you'll agree.

Incidentally, the environmentally friendly types among you will be pleased to hear that the leaflets went straight in the recycling bin, which by coincidence was being emptied the next day.

So what would I have said if I'd got to the door in time?

They'll never know, but for the benefit of the next lot who come a' knocking, here goes.

Firstly, in case they think I need persuading to get out and vote on June 8, I have used every vote I've had since I turned 18, except for a European election when I could not get back from work in time before the polling station closed (yes, we journalists have the hardest job in the world!).

Second, there is one party I have never voted for and hope I never have to.

Next, there is one party I will vote for as a tactical move.

Then there is the 'default' party I have voted for when I cannot make my mind up about, or have been unimpressed by, any of the others.

Added to all this, there have been times when my choice has been based on, basically, me being vindictive against certain other candidates on the ballot paper.

Finally, there is a party whose principles I endorse but for a million and one reasons can't always find it in me to support.

So, what does my personal manifesto look like? Just one paragraph really.

The party which promises to outlaw cold calling by any political candidates or their representatives, thus leaving me in peace to get on with some gardening, gets my vote.

Now, if that's not a vote winner, I don't know what is.

STEVE PARLETT

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Mystery of why my bin was missed out

I RETURNED home from work today to discover that our recycling bin had not been emptied. My family are fully aware of the need to recycle and support a reasonable process so to do.

I therefore emptied the bin contents on the drive to discover what we had done wrong but was at a loss to discover the reason why the bin had not been emptied.

I'm a firm believer in education so I rang the council to find out what the problem was so it could be rectified and to ensure that it doesn't happen again.

The customer assistant told me the bin was reported as "contaminated" but apparently they don't bother to elucidate beyond that simple statement. In an effort to assist, the person I was speaking to went through the complete, somewhat bizarre and seemingly arbitrary, list of things which couldn't be placed in the recycling bin and I am still at a loss to understand what it was that caused our bin to be bypassed.

During my conversation, the council employee told me that a recycling bin can be rejected if a "So much as a sweet wrapper" is found in there".

Now, I don't know about the rest of the council tax payers but I'm not entirely sure that I find the thought of refuse collection operatives sifting through my bins for such minutiae as sweet wrappers an adequate use of the time and salaries of those we pay for through our ever-increasing council tax bills.

I imagine that if I discovered that a bin was bypassed for such an item, it would greatly reduce the enthusiasm of even the most ardent recycler.

However, in the meantime, I'm stuck with a bin which apparently contains an illicit, but unknown substance, feeling like a criminal, and having been assured that if it, whatever it is, remains in my bin for the next collection, it will be rejected again.

NAME AND ADDRESS SUPPLIED

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Sandwell Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL
sandwell.chronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

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Fury over care hit by hackers

WOW, what a wake-up call and I'm really hacked off!

How dare lives be put at risk by "hackers"!

What right have these irresponsible people to electronically interfere with the medical care of thousands of people?

Who knows how many people have had cancer treatment delayed or perhaps, life-saving operations cancelled?

If this hacking is state-sponsored, organised crime or some nerd in a bedroom, the reality is our NHS was brought to its knees, and a warning to us all, that the firewalls we have been lured into believe are protecting us our health, economy, and security obviously don't work.

So what have we learnt? because it seems very little, if we haven't got back-up systems to protect our data, money and lives.

S T VAUGHAN
Birmingham

Taxing decision for nation's electorate

LABOUR'S manifesto was released to the expected Tory cry of more borrowing, more tax and more debt.

It is no surprise that the Tories will do everything to encourage you to not look into the detail. The Labour manifesto is fully costed and puts the party firmly on the side of the vast majority of people in the country.

Under a Labour government we will see those who earn the most shoulder a little bit more to ease the crippling weight that so many of us are under. Instead of tax cuts to the wealthy that the Tories have overseen, Labour will modestly increase taxes on those earning over £80,000pa. Education, health, infrastructure and housing all have carefully thought out ideas that work for the many and not the few. What an opportunity we have. Let's seize it.

ANDREW SCATTERGOOD
Wednesbury

Parking is vanishing

I SEE from the last edition 'eyesore car park to be demolished'. Yet more car parking is being taken from West Bromwich Town Centre – the police station was built on a car park, as was Sandwell College.

Apart from the car park at New Square, the only other car parking available in the town centre is at Dartmouth Square and the cost of parking there is quite outrageous and the car park itself in a dreadful state. What proposals do Sandwell Council have for car parking, particularly for disabled drivers, in the town centre?

MRS ANN HARRISON
West Bromwich

Diesel, don't

THE experts told us to use diesel cars; they were better on fuel, if a bit slower, and diesel was cheaper. Then diesels polluted the environment, threatening road tax levels. Still, we could all use public transport. By the way, buses use diesel.

ROBERT WHITE
West Bromwich

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Jumping for joy thanks to leisure staff boost

A DEAF-BLIND woman has been given a boost after West Bromwich Leisure Centre gave her the chance to carry on with her hobby of trampolining, despite her disability.

Helene Ryles has always had a passion for trampolining, something she has not been able to do for over two years. This all changed when Ruth Bennett-Anderson, who is the community support service manager of charity SENSE, approached staff at the centre, and last October 2016 Helene was able to begin trampolining again.

Since then Helene has not only improved her ability to complete moves and routines on the trampoline, but has formed a friendship with her instructor Sarah.

Sarah took the time to learn how to tactile sign with Helene so that they could communicate effectively and make their lessons more productive and engaging. Ruth said: "Helene has struggled to find a trampoline club or leisure centre that would teach her for over two years. It has been so frustrating for her and now to see how well she is doing with Sarah is fantastic.

"The fact that Sarah has been willing to learn how to tactile sign to communicate with Helene has demonstrated West Bromwich Leisure Centre's commitment to inclusion."

Chris Shipway Contract Health and Wellbeing manager at West Bromwich Leisure Centre said "We are extremely proud of both Helene's achievement and Sarah's commitment to going the extra mile for our customers.'

Has this inspired you to get more active? If so email enquiries@westbromwichlc.co.uk or check out the website at www.westbromwichlc.co.uk

Inquest verdict on tragedy that claimed teenager's life

THE INQUEST on a teenager knocked over and killed as he crossed the road on his bike has concluded – two years after his death.

Adam Jones, aged 15, was crossing Walsall Road in West Bromwich in March 2015 when he was hit by a VW Bora. The driver ran off after the crash and has never been brought to justice.

A court case over the death collapsed at the end of last year.

And yesterday coroner Zafar Siddique concluded at Black Country Coroner's Court that Baggies fan Adam, from Wednesbury, died by way of a road traffic collision.

Unemployed Tyrone Sadler, 25, of Smethwick, had been charged with causing death by driving a vehicle while uninsured. But the case against him collapsed due to a lack of evidence at the end of last year.

Sergeant Paul Hughes, the senior police officer in the case, told the coroner that a bank card in Mr Sadler's name and a coat with his DNA were found in the Bora at the scene of the crash, as had been heard during the court hearings.

Questions

And Mr Sadler was called to the coroner's court in Oldbury last week in order to give evidence.

But he chose not to answer questions from the coroner or a lawyer representing Adam's family, other than to confirm his identity.

Nigel Power, Forensic Collision Investigator at West Midlands Police, told the coroner the car's driver would have had less than a second to avoid Adam. This was because it had been behind a silver Ford Focus which swerved to avoid Adam.

Mr Power, said: "It is most likely that the Bora would have been travelling in lane two [nearest the kerb].

"As the Ford Focus braked and swerved only then would the bike have come into view of the Bora.

"If it was travelling at 40mph, and had been three to four car lengths back from the Focus as stated by its driver, the bike is likely to have been between 12m (39ft) and 16m (52ft) in front of the Bora. That would have given the driver between 0.67 seconds and 0.89 seconds to prevent the impact."

Mr Power explained that damage to the car was consistent with it having been travelling at 40mph, which is the road's speed-limit.

He added he could 'categorically state' Adam was doing a 'wheelie' when he was hit near to the junction with Beacon View Road. He concluded the driver of the Bora would have had insufficient time to avoid Adam who was left with catastrophic injuries from which he died at the scene. It is not known who was driving the Bora when the crash took place on March 26, 2015, at 7.39pm. The Bora was found 80m away from the crash scene. Mr Power added: "There was no evidence of any emergency braking other than slight grinding of the rear offside tyre. That does not mean it did not take place."

Adam's friend, Matthew Cheesborough, 26, told the hearing he was standing on a nearby petrol forecourt when he heard the collision happen and ran over to find Adam injured.

Shahram Mahmood, who had been driving the Focus, told how he swerved to the left to avoid Adam, hitting the kerb, before coming to a stop further down the road. He said: "I saw the driver open the door. He opened the door, looked, and then ran."

Mr Mahmood was asked by the family's lawyer, Charles Crow, if it was possible that he had been travelling at more than 40mph to which Mr Mahmood replied no.

Coroner Mr Siddique said at the conclusion of the inquest: "On the balance of probability it was likely that Adam was doing a wheelie, based on the damage to the vehicles. I will leave it as an area of dispute, the exact speed of the vehicles."

His devastated mother and father, Mandy Ruston and Mark Jones, from Friar Park, Wednesbury, led a campaign to find who caused her son's death. It was a fight backed by Adam's beloved West Bromwich Albion, with goalkeeper Ben Foster issuing an appeal for information on behalf of the club and messages shown to thousands of fans on the big screen at The Hawthorns. Adam's mother and father were not present at the inquest.

The killed youngster, who was crossing Walsall Road

The 15-year-old was fond of horses

Adam's mother Mandy Rushton, at her son's grave

It's real boring for city mayor with water visit

BIRMINGHAM'S Lord Mayor has been to see the launch of the tunnel boring machine which will help with water supplies for the region

The works is the second of three huge multi-million pound bypass tunnels being built in Mid Wales at the Elan Valley Aqueduct (EVA), which has been bringing water to the homes and businesses of Birmingham and the surrounding area for more than 100 years.

However, after so many years of service, the need for regular maintenance and refurbishment is becoming ever more frequent and so the time has come to provide extra support for the EVA to make sure that it can continue to provide service for another 100 years.

Enter the Birmingham Resilience Project – Severn Trent's flagship £300million programme.

Pupils from Nantmel School at the relaunch of the tunnel boring machine

From left, Clare Evans, Mayoress of Rhayader, Birmingham Mayor and Mayoress, Deed and Carl Rice, Paul Dennison, Severn Trent EVA programme manager, Kelvyn Curry, county councillor and Noel Hughes, Severn Trent team manager

Pipeline

Paul Dennison, programme manager, said: "At the moment, the EVA is the sole source of supply into Birmingham, and storage at our treatment works at Frankley means we can only turn it off for a few days at a time for maintenance. To allow us to turn it off for longer periods, an alternative water supply for the city is being built. Work began this month on a new pipeline from Lickhill, near Stourport-on-Severn, 25 km from the existing water treatment works in Birmingham.

"However, our checks on the existing aqueduct show that in three places, there is work that we'd rather do before the new pipeline is completed. As we can't shut down the aqueduct, we've had to come up with alternative solutions."

Three new tunnels will be built, then connected at either end, to bypass sections of the existing aqueduct. These will be at Bleddfa, Nantmel and Knighton in Mid Wales.

Mr Dennison added: "We've been working with our contract partner, the BNM Alliance, since 2015 on the first tunnel at Bleddfa. That part of the work is complete and we've now started work on the second of the three bypass tunnels.

"Councillor Carl Rice, Lord Mayor of Birmingham, came to see the relaunch of the tunnel boring machine at Nantmel, where it will spend the next five months underground, digging a 1km long tunnel. Local school children from Crossgates County Primary School held a competition to name the machine, with 'Nantmel Supermole' being the winner. Once this tunnel is complete, work will begin on the third and final tunnel at Knighton in 2018."

"This project is the biggest that we have ever undertaken."

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An atmospheric image of Monmore Green Stadium

Wolverhampton Wolves rider Jacob Thorssell in action

Queen of Speedway Fay Taylour featured in the photography exhibition

Photographer on track to share love of speedway at exhibition

A KEEN motorsport photographer showcased snaps of the rip-roaring world of speedway – and said he hoped the display would get more people into in the sport.

MEMORY LANE

By Jamie Brassington

Jon George, and his friends, exhibited around 100 pictures at Wolverhampton Central Library.

The stunning images ranged from riders in the heat of the action at Wolverhampton's Monmore Green Stadium, to historic black and white photographs taken at the Haynes International Motor Museum, in Somerset.

Jon, chairman of the Compton G Camera based at Tettenhall Wood Institute, hopes the display has inspired people to take an interest in the sport.

The exhibition comes after the camera club was granted rare access to capture the racing in action up close and personal at Monmore Green, home to the Parrys International Wolves and Elite League winners last season. Current riders, including Jacob Thorssell, featured in the display.

Promoter Chris Van Straaten gave the photographers an unobstructed view from the centre of the track in March.

Jon also added historic photographs which he took at the motor museum. The snaps include two female riders, Fay Taylour 'the Queen of Speedway' and Eva Asquith,who were both big names in the sport in the 1920s.

In addition, Jon threw in atmospheric pictures from Monmore Green, capturing behind the scenes of the racing action.

The 68-year-old, from Merry Hill in Wolverhampton, said: "We decided to focus the exhibition on the speedway because several of our members like the sport.

"I hope it would encourage people to take an interest in speedway.

"The majority of the photographs were what we had taken this year but it was also interesting to focus on the history of the speedway."

One black and white image captures Fay and Eva shaking hands as they sit on their respective motorbikes side by side, while what appears to be race organisers stand behind the two female riders.

Flying

Another old photograph shows Fay sitting astride a speedway motorcycle inside of a building or stadium. The photograph taken from the side, shows the Irish rider, known as 'Flying Fay' wearing a long coat with a fur collar.

Taylour was regarded as the best female rider of her day.

Jon said he believed Fay held the track record at Crystal Palace and beat a lot of male riders But in the 1930s women were banned from speedway because it could be awkward for medics to remove clothing if they had an accident, Jon said.

"It wasn't until the 1990s women were allowed to compete again in speedway," he said. During his visit to the museum, Jon had a surprise encounter with a former world champion rider whose career spanned the 1950s to the 70s.

"I was taking photographs there and someone tapped me on the back," said Jon. "It was Barry Briggs, he is like the Stanley Matthews of speedway. There are display boards there at the museum about him."

Jon, originally from Somerset, used to see grass-track races while he lived down south, which is a similar type of motorbike racing to speedway.

But it wasn't until he moved to Wolverhampton in 1969 that he got his first glimpse of the sport, during the era of world champion 'Great Dane' Ole Olsen, who raced for Wolverhampton Wolves between 1970 and 75.

Ole also features in the exhibition. On one image, he can be seen in pack of riders who are racing at Wembley, in 1976, in the Intercontinental Final and is joined by Ivan Mauger and Doug Wyer.

The 1976 Intercontinental Final at Wembley

The Queen of Speedway Fay Taylour and Eva Asquith

Celebrating Volunteer's Week 2017
Volunteer Centre Sandwell in partnership with NHS The Recovery College

Presents; Midland Actors Theatre new play

The Ward
by David Calcutt

Tuesday 6th June 2017
West Bromwich Town Hall, High Street
West Bromwich, B70 8DY

It is aimed especially at clients, carers, and professionals in the mental health service.

The play, which features a community cast, lasts 30 minutes approximately, and will be accompanied by a workshop and discussion with the audience.
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Locally, Volunteer Centre, Sandwell has held Volunteer Recruitment Fairs, Sandwell Volunteer Awards and last year invited over 140 volunteers to West Bromwich Albion Football Club for a Thank You Lunch.

This year in partnership with NHS Recovery College, Volunteer Centre Sandwell will be hosting a community play entitled The Ward on Tuesday 6th June at West Bromwich Town Hall. Two performances free entry first performance begins at 10.30am, second performance at 1pm.

The play which features a community cast, is aimed especially at clients, carers, and professionals in the mental health service.

To reserve your place contact Volunteer Centre Sandwell 0121 544 8326 or email Reuben@volunteercentresandwell.co.uk.

Ceramics in studio display

AWARD-WINNING art featuring ceramic flowers and woolly creations goes on show at an Oldbury studio's open day.

Creative Arts, in Cyprus Street, is encouraging people along to find out more about what it does when it throws its doors open on Friday June 23, from 11-3pm.

The community arts team was behind the recent ceramic flower exhibition which won a top award from the Royal Horticultural Society's Britain in Bloom Award in the It's Your Neighbourhood category.

Also on show is an exhibition called The Pull of Wool which features interesting photos of people knitting in unusual locations as well as photos of people who don't normally knit and some quirky knitted items.

More than 500 people from a range of community and education groups across the Black Country helped make the magical ceramic garden featuring 1,200 beautiful hand-made ceramic flowers and 500 mini beasts.

Jailed Wednesbury raiders took half a torn £5 note

TWO bungling brothers escaped with just half a worthless torn five pound note when they raided a Black Country filling station, a judge heard.

The pair were ripped off when one of them made a grab for cash in the till at the same time as a quick thinking assistant – and lost the tug of war, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

But the robbery still cost half-brothers Gareth Donnelly and Barry Millward dear when they were jailed for a total of five and a half years.

Staff were immediately suspicious after the duo walked into Apple Green Services, also known as Tamebridge Services, in Bridge Street, Wednesbury on September 9, said Mr Christopher O'Gorman, prosecuting. The woman behind the counter served the other customers until the two men were the only ones left.

Millward, aged 36, was standing by the entrance and told his brother 'just buy some chocolate,' continued the prosecutor. Donnelly did as he was told and proffered a £1 coin as payment for the confectionary. As soon as the till was opened to get his change the 35-year-old made a lunge for the cash inside, the court heard.

Mr O'Gorman continued: "As he made a grab for the money the female assistant instinctively pushed it further into the till."

Then a customer who had just left the store noticed the disturbance and returned to throw a drinks can at Millward, hitting him on the head. The short changed raiders then fled with their haul of a half a five pound note, concluded Mr O'Gorman. The woman assistant later told police Donnelly had grabbed her hand during the bungled bid to snatch the money but did not injure her. Both men had a long list of previous convictions, it was said.

Mr Zaheer Afzal, defending, explained that the father of four had been blighted by Class A drug addiction for years. Donnelly from Dale Terrace, Tividale and Millward of Trafalgar Court, Birmingham New Road, Tividale both admitted robbery and were each jailed for two and half years. Millward received a consecutive six month sentence for breaking the terms of his bail by failing to attend a hearing of the case without reasonable excuse.

Reminder on pharmacies

THE NHS is reminding people in Birmingham and Solihull where they can access expert medical treatment during the Spring bank holiday on Monday.

Patients can save time in the waiting room by visiting their pharmacist for quick, confidential advice on a range of common illnesses.

Kiran Patel, Medical Director at NHS England (West Midlands) said: "Your local pharmacy can help you with more than you might think. Pharmacists offer expert, confidential advice and treatment for many minor health problems."

Pharmacy opening hours in Birmingham and Solihull over the bank holiday can be found on www.nhs.uk along with information on walk-in centres, urgent care centres or minor injuries units.

Patients can type in their postcode on the website to find their nearest services.

Teenagers in crash treated for injuries

The wreckage of the car. Photo: @OldburyFire

Showing the damage of the back seats

FOUR teenagers were treated for multiple injuries by paramedics after the car they were in smashed in to a lamp post. Oldbury Fire Service tweeted pictures which showed destruction left to the vehicle.

Two men and two women were out of the vehicle when crews arrived. It happened in Oakham Road in Oldbury in the early hours of Saturday morning.

They were treated by West Midlands Ambulance Service for multiple injuries, the fire service said. The photo shows the extent of the damage following the severe crash.

In 2015, a man was killed after being hit by a car as he strapped his child into the back seat of his own vehicle on the same road.

Father-of-eight Dave Hinton, 47, from Halesowen, had taken his family to collect a Wendy house he had bought online when a car struck him on June 20.

Oldbury Fire Station tweeted: "Unbelievably, four teens have escaped this wreckage on Oakham Road.

"Note the deformity in the rear seats caused by their body weight on impact."

People replied to the tweet with shocked comments.

Ward councillor Maria Crompton said: "There's been a number of crashes on the road."It gets really quite busy at rush hour too which then makes it really difficult for cars to get out and turn at junctions."

Summertime show to highlight talents

A SUMMER season of art is set to go on show at Sandwell Arts Café, in West Bromwich's former Public building, showcasing local creative talent.

Artists from Sandwell's Adult and Family Learning Art Group will exhibit their work until June 5, then a celebration of Sandwell College students' work will replace it when the annual end-of-year exhibition goes up. Artworks by students will be on show from June 7 to July 1 at the premises, based in Sandwell College Central Sixth, in New Street.

As well as exhibitions, the cafe hosts creative events and during the summer children can enjoy a taste of the coast when the café hosts lots of seaside-themed arts and crafts on Tuesday August 8, 15 and 22 from 10am to 12 noon.

On Thursday 10, 17 and 21 August Fab Lab By The Sea has more seaside-themed creativity for children from 10am to 12 noon. Tickets for Tuesday and Thursday activities cost £2.

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- Transport to and from the Day Centre each day
- Lunch club drop in sessions
- Full day care sessions are provided for older people with dependent or personal care needs,those with very poor mobility and/or have been assessed by Social services and offered a personal budget.

This service costs £26.49 per day with a subscription charge of £7 per day for activities,transport and meals. Lunch club drop in sessions are also available to any older person who wishes to attend social activities and make new friends.
This costs £14 per day for activities and meals plus £2 for transport if required.
Taster sessions are available so call now on 0121 525 2499 to arrange your place.

We are always looking for people who can help us at our Day Centre, making cups of tea, helping out in the kitchen or running an activity session.

Our volunteers receive FREE training in care work, so if you would like to apply please contact us on 0121 314 4526

Monday Morning Men's Group

Meeting every Monday (CLOSED 29th MAY BANK HOLIDAY & REOPENS 5th JUNE)
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The Creative Hub, Wesley Community Centre, High Street, West Bromwich, B70 8ND

- Come along and meet our group - all men aged 50+ welcome
- Opportunities to take part in woodworking and other handy projects
- Walking football sessions until 11:30 - meet ex players. Just bring a comfortable pair of trainers to have a kick about.
- Get together for weekly game of snooker, maybe play dominoes, cards or just have a chat and a cuppa
- Free activities and refreshments every week
- 5th June RSPB attending to make bird boxes for the garden.

Lunch Club & Day Care Centre

An opportunity to meet up have a two course lunch, socialise and have some laughs. We meet every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at Age UK Sandwell Day Centre, 1a Beeches Road, West Bromwich B70 6QE. 0121 525 2499. Day trips, bingo, quizzes and chair based exercise. Transport provided if you live in Sandwell and FREE taster sessions available.

For more information please call **0121 3144526**
or visit **www.ageuksandwell.org.uk**

Damning report issued by CQC on care home

VULNERABLE people at a care home in Wednesbury are not being protected from abuse from other residents, a damning inspection report has said.

Residents at The Shrubbery told Care Quality Commission inspectors they did not feel safe.

The care home has been placed into special measures and warned it will be shut down if it does not improve.

The report states: "Quality monitoring and audits had failed to identify that a number of areas of service provision were not meeting the requirements of the law.

"People were at risk of harm and injury and no action had been taken to address this. The provider had failed to notify us of issues that they were required to by law.

"There were insufficient staff available to meet people's needs or to keep them safe.

The provider had not ensured that the premises were safe and free from hazards. People were not properly protected from abuse or degrading treatment from other people."

However, more positive comments were received in respect of staff training.

It added: "Staff told us that they received an induction when they started to work at the home, on-going supervision and that they were supported well."

The Shrubbery, in Woodgreen Road, is registered to provide accommodation and personal care to a maximum of 28 older people and younger adults who may have dementia or mental health needs. On the day of the inspection, in March, 22 people lived at the home. However, there was no registered manager in post. The home was rated inadequate in two categories and requiring improvement in three others.

A spokesperson for the home said: "We have made significant improvements since the release of the report. We have taken all the necessary steps to inform families and we are working closely with all the external agencies."

Travelodge opens its doors

The 78-bed Travelodge hotel built in Providence Place, near to the West Bromwich Building Society's new premises

A £5 MILLION hotel which has been built in West Bromwich has opened its doors for the first time.

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"It has been built next to West Bromwich Building Society new five-storey headquarters.

Travelodge's UK development director Tony O'Brien said: "We are delighted to have secured such a prominent site in the heart of West Bromwich. The new Travelodge forms part of the recently opened Providence Place development, adjacent to West Bromwich Building Society's new HQ and 50m from BT's new Regional Business Centre.

"The site also adjoins the A41 and so it is easy to find and access and provide quick, direct connections to the M5.

"There has been massive regeneration of West Bromwich's town centre in the last few years, with millions of pounds having been invested in new retail, restaurant and entertainment facilities."

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£13m housing plan for Black Lake site

PLANS have been unveiled for a £13 million housing development at Black Lake in West Bromwich, creating 70 new homes.

Developer Woodbourne Group has submitted a planning application for the scheme, backed by the Local Enterprise Partnership and prospective parliamentary candidate Adrian Bailey.

The planning application seeks permission to demolish the part-derelict industrial estate to make way for a £13m project.

If the application is approved, Woodbourne says the demolition work is likely to start at the end of this summer. The proposed housing scheme will compromise of 53 houses and 17 apartments.

Reforms

The estate will sit next to the Black Lake tram stop, with a travel time of just 19 minutes to Birmingham city centre. Tani Dulay, the 25-year-old chief executive of Woodbourne Group, says the new project is in line with the Government's housing white paper – 'Fixing our broken housing market' – released in February and setting out a broad range of reforms to increase the supply of new homes.

Mr Dulay said: "Notwithstanding current increased market uncertainty following the snap election, Woodbourne Group remains in robust health to capitalise on a continuing benign land market with £10m under offer on sites in the region and a pipeline now close to £50m.

"The number of households in England is projected to increase at an average of 210,000 a year between 2014 and 2039 according to government figures released last summer.

"The housing market fundamentals remain strong with high demand from home buyers, good availability of affordable mortgages, ample land supply and cross party political support to build more homes in the UK." He added: "This exciting opportunity will help breathe new life into this area. One that is well-connected to communities by car, public transport, cycling and walking"

Adrian Bailey, said: "I welcome the news of Woodbourne Group's new build scheme at Black Lake as it is projects like this that can add even greater value to the geographical area but can also give a boost to the local economy." Chris Handy, board member of the Black Country LEP, said: "We support the planning application for Black Lake which will bring 70 new homes to the area and we will work with partners like the Woodbourne Group to ensure the project shares the same principles as the Black Country Garden City project.

"The Garden City, which will see more than 45,000 homes built over the next 10 years, is creating a mixed economy of housing, through projects like Black Lake in West Bromwich, building affordable homes alongside high quality, and sustainable, amenities to ensure we attract and retain people in the Black Country."

The Black Lake scheme will also provide charging points for EV vehicles and offer bicycle storage.

An artist's impression of part of the scheme for Black Lake

Aiming for Peak fitness ahead of mountainous task

AFTER seeing the effects of child slavery and trafficking Ben Colley decided he wanted to take action to make a positive difference.

The 40-year-old from Sedgley worked as a paramedic for West Midlands Ambulance Service for 10 years, during which time he received training on how to stop the signs of slavery and trafficking involving young children.

It opened his eyes to a crime that he claims 'goes unseen' in society.

On June 20, he will take on the Three Peaks challenge – climbing the highest mountains in England, Wales and Scotland in 24 hours – to raise money for a charity called Unseen that helps children who are put in those situations.

Mr Colley said: "I remember taking that training course and it just shocked me, I couldn't believe what these children have to go through. It was a real eye-opener, especially to the fact that these crimes go unseen by so many.

"My sister does a lot of work with police on how to tackle the problem and when I spoke to her more about it, I just asked if she could point me in the right direction so I could offer my help to a charity."

Mr Colley, who runs marketing company Ben Colley Media with his wife, will tackle the challenge with his friend Leon Chadwick.

He said: "I have been raising money for a lot of different charities, mostly for foreign relief, by doing something crazy each year. I have done marathons and that sort of thing but this is a whole new level."

To donate to Mr Colley's cause, visit justgiving.com/fundraising benandleon3peakchallenge

Ben Colley, of Sedgley, is getting ready for the Three Peaks Challenge

Demolition on way for two buildings

THE historic gas showroom and the former Smethwick Hall Sports Centre are to be demolished to make way for new homes and businesses. Council chiefs have given the go-ahead to knocking down the two buildings along with the former education offices Shaftesbury House, the multi storey car park in West Bromwich town centre and the former Crosswells Road Depot in Oldbury.

The former gas showroom on West Bromwich High Street did look set to be saved earlier this year by the Black Country Living Museum as part of £21 million plan to relocate the 1940s property to its base in Dudley.

But, these plans were dismissed by the council as being "pie in the sky", claiming no offer was ever made for the derelict property.

Councillor Moore said at the Cabinet meeting last Wednesday that the site will go on the market to make way for either a new commercial development or new residential development after it's demolished.

The multi storey car park in West Bromwich Town Centre will also be bulldozed as the council claimed it couldn't justify spending money on the "tatty" site.

Jail term for rapist who went overseas

A RAPIST has started a long jail sentence after justice finally caught up with him almost eight years after the crime.

Amar Mehraj was one of several men who committed serious sexual offences against a 17-year-old girl after she had been plied with drink and drugs on July 18 2009, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

BY JOHN SCOTT

The 29-year-old had flown to Pakistan before scientific tests revealed his involvement but police were on hand to arrest him as soon as he returned to the UK in November last year. He was jailed for nine years nine months on Friday.

The teenage victim had been driven to an address in Vicarage Road, Oldbury by another man she knew but had met by chance, said Miss Sophie Murray, who continued: "At the house there was another man she knew and several others she did not. Alcohol was brought for her."

The teenager was given whisky and cannabis until 'insensible' and then taken upstairs to a bedroom where she was 'subjected to multiple rape over a considerable period of time,' it was said.

At one stage she tried unsuccessfully to escape through an upstairs window before one of the men at the house took pity and helped her to leave to alert police.

She was at the house when Mehraj reached the address he had supposedly visited to buy cannabis, the court heard. Mr Rashid Mohammed, defending, said: "People were drinking and smoking, so he stayed. He accepts he went to the bedroom and had sexual intercourse. He was not aware that there was a female at the premises when he decided to go there."

Mehraj was getting married in Pakistan and had bought a plane ticket to fly there before the incident, it was said. He left the UK before forensic examination of samples taken from the victim identified him as among those who had raped her.

Mr Mohammed added: "He became aware police wanted to speak to him but ran away from the situation until it became too much to bear and came back knowing there was a possibility of being arrested."

In the meantime three men had been convicted of raping the victim following a trial in September 2010. Each was jailed for eight years while the victim changed her identity and started a new life.

Mr Mohammed pointed out: "When he left the UK he had not been charged and was not even wanted by the police." Judge Nicholas Webb jailed Mehraj from Giles Road, Langley for nine years nine months after he pleaded guilty.

Dermatologist is on top doctors list

A WEST Midlands children's doctor has been named in a list of the top female doctors in the country.

Birmingham Children's Hospital dermatologist Professor Celia Moss OBE is one of 80 experts included on the prestigious Medical Women's Federation list. To mark its centenary, the special publication profiles some of the top medics that are shaping the face of UK medicine today.

Professor Moss, who has worked at the leading paediatric hospital for more than 25 years has been acknowledged for her 'dedication to improving and pushing the boundaries of care and being at the forefront of treatment and innovation in paediatric dermatology'.

She was awarded an OBE in 2016 for her dedicated career of helping and improving the care of children and young people with skin conditions.

Professor Moss said: "It's truly an honour to have been recognised by the Medical Women's Federation."

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Express & Star

Haunting tale still a chiller

The Woman in Black, Wolverhampton Grand

SUSAN Hill's ghost story about a vengeful spirit has been turned into a TV drama, a hit movie and a popular play that's been running in London's West End for quarter of a century.

The story is told again in the touring production of the late Stephen Mallatratt's study in terror. It tells of an Edwardian solicitor, Arthur Kipps, who encounters The Woman in Black when sorting out the affairs of a deceased client in a remote mansion on an island in the marshes.

In Mallatratt's ingenious version, the older Kipps attempts to exorcise his terrifying experience by employing an actor to help him tell his tale to an audience of family and friends. But there is a macabre twist.

With few props, a sometimes ear-splitting soundscape and atmospheric lighting in which threatening shadows loom, Matthew Spencer's enthusiastic Actor and David Acton's reticent Kipps conjure up the tragic tale of a bitter and malevolent ghost. They weave in some light relief, thanks to an imagined dog and a few digs at the craft of acting.

There is a third cast member, of whom it is not wise to say too much, but her appearances will produce a shudder. There are at least half a dozen jump in your seat moments. The Woman in Black continues to haunt the Grand Theatre until Saturday. Go... if you dare.

Leon Burakowski

Julian Capolei, William Grint and Matthew Jacobs-Morgan in Tommy at Birmingham Rep

Tommy – hear this, feel this potent show

Tommy, Birmingham Rep

THEATRE REVIEWS
by Leon Burakowski

SEE me, feel me, touch me, heal me – the haunting refrain returns again and again in this powerful and poignant version of The Who's rock opera Tommy.

First created by Pete Townsend as a concept album in 1969, revamped as a flamboyant movie by Ken Russell in '75, it now makes a rare sortie to the stage in this delirious, soulfully sung production with theatre company Ramps on the Moon.

Ramps are an inclusive company of deaf, disabled and non-disabled actors and musicians, and this is their strength as they bring innovation to the story about a 'deaf, dumb and blind kid', staged on a stark metallic set. Sign language is weaved into movement and dance as the woefully abused Tommy retreats into his own world after the murder of his RAF airman father – until becoming a Pinball Wizard, a messiah figure for the counter-culture.

The singing is stunning. Natasha Lewis (in various roles) and Shekinah McFarlane (as the voice of Tommy's mother, played by Donna Mullings) brought soul power to the rock score. Julien Capolei and Matthew Jacobs-Morgan sang for Tommy, the plaintive William Grint. Credit also to the singing of Alim Jayda as stepdad Frank and Amy Trigg as Tommy's only friend, Sally.

The uncomfortable 'Fiddle About' scene in which Tommy is sexually abused by his Uncle Ernie (Garry Robson) is creepily suggested. Lukas Alexander is a whirling demonic presence as the bully Cousin Kevin.

The star turn has to be theatre veteran Peter Straker as the formidable Acid Queen, presented as an over-the-hill drag act, who is gifted a new song from Townsend, Acid Queen 2. Straker doesn't hold back.

Tommy is a manic musical, flawed but fascinating with some great tunes. I doubt there will be many better productions of it than this, at Birmingham Rep to Saturday.

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WOLVERHAMPTON MAGAZINE

Rhubarb! Boycs gives his sport the stick

An Evening with Boycott & Aggers, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

HE may be forthright and opinionated, but Geoffrey Boycott talks a lot of sense when it comes to cricket, particularly the current state of the game.

The Yorkshire and England legend was in Wolverhampton as part of a tour to mark the 40th anniversary of one of his greatest achievements, scoring his 100th first class century. There were a few surprise video moments thrown in too, as well as other archive footage, while Test Match Special colleague Jonathan Agnew, having climbed off his sick bed, kept proceedings going.

'Aggers' asked the questions in the first half before reading out those posed by the 700-strong audience after the interval. Boycott,15 years on from being given three months to live, has proven as stoic as he ever did at the crease.

He even brought on a stick of rhubarb as a prop, and demonstrated how to play a forward defensive with it.

It wasn't one of Boycott's longest innings, but it was one of his most entertaining. **Mark Shipp**

It's Rich pickings from USA

Rich Hall, Stourbridge Town Hall

THE grizzled grump from Montana came to the not-so-Wild West Midlands to mine for comedy gold the cultural chasm between the UK and the USA.

Hall benefits from a face that looks like it's been left out in the desert, a hound dog expression to match his downbeat humour. But a smile plays at the edge of his mouth as he questions his Stourbridge audience searching for a trucker or any kind of blue collar worker but comes up with an accountant, IT consultant and a business analyst.

He knows England well and has a Liverpudlian wife. In the gag-slinging first half he looks at the differences between the two countries, such as the enormous portion sizes of American meals, the wallet-emptying health 'care' system and, of course, Trump.

In the second hour he brings on his musical compadres for the Hoedown where he sings comic country songs. The one about Bob Dylan's disappointing concerts was a treat – 'as he murdered Maggie's Farm, it set off my car alarm'. **LB**

REVIEWS

Josh Widdecombe, Tim Key, Tom Parry and Romesh Ranganathan

Inimitable compere and big name acts play it for laughs

Hilarity Charity Gala, Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton – by Mark Shipp

A HOST of big names took to the stage for this comedy fest in aid of Wolverhampton's Central Youth Theatre – and boy what a laugh we all had.

Now in its fourth year, the entertaining Daniel Kitson has become a fixture as compere. This year, Kitson was able to introduce Alun Cochrane, Josh Widdecombe – for second time at the gala – Suzi Ruffell, Tim Key and Romesh Ranganathan.

The auditorium was packed with more than 900 theatregoers and we had an ideal view from our seat in the box, although I did fear we would be 'picked on'. Instead, Kitson turned his attentions to others.

Cochrane, who described his material as environmentally friendly – he likes to 'reuse, reduce and recycle' his comedy, was just getting into his stride before his time was up, but Widdecombe and Ruffell in particular ensured an excellent first half.

After Key's unorthodox set, the brilliant Ranganathan, performing as a favour to his friend, Wolverhampton's Tom Parry, of Pappy's, who helped to organise the show, made sure everyone went home happy.

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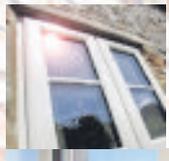

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Weathering storm of climate change

BRITISH gardens could end up devoid of luscious lawns, with popular plants proving more difficult to grow and plant pests and diseases spreading, according to a new report from the RHS and leading academics into the impact of climate change on gardening.

Plants will have to cope with increasingly warmer and drier weather in summer, but also more turbulent spells with intense, sometimes unpredictable heavy showers and strong winds.

The news is not all bad, though. Gardeners in the north could enjoy a longer growing season, experts say.

The wide-ranging report, Gardening in a Changing Climate, looks at both the impact the increase in global temperatures is currently having on plants and gardeners, and the future of gardening as temperatures increase. The report is a collaboration between the RHS and academics from the universities of Sheffield, Reading and Coventry, with input from experts from the Met office.

It's the first in-depth analysis of the effects of climate change on UK gardening in more than a decade – the RHS last investigated the issue in 2002 with the National Trust and UKCIP (Climate Impacts Programme) to produce the Gardening in the Global Greenhouse report.

While the 2002 report concluded that gardeners would be basking in Mediterranean temperatures and so could grow more plants that thrive in bright, dry conditions. The updated report has found that gardeners can expect more extreme weather, characterised by more variable, intense rainfall, combined with an increase in dry summers, which will be most pronounced in the south of the UK.

Green dream – the days of a luscious lawn could be limited

Gardeners looking to cope with the challenge of increased rainfall may have to adopt new practices to ensure the survival of some of our favourite plants. Traditional plants, such as tulips, alliums and asters may have to be planted in raised beds to survive increased rainfall. Those experiencing higher temperatures may turn to heat loving plants, such as aloe or lavender.

Lush, green lawns are likely to be a major casualty and may have to be converted to dry meadows, as pressure on water supplies increases.

Based on the report, the RHS Garden for a Changing Climate will be unveiled at the inaugural RHS Chatsworth Flower Show next month, designed by Andy Clayden and Dr Ross Cameron of the University of Sheffield and RHS scientist Eleanor Webster. It will show a small suburban garden now and in the near future.

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Sandwell Chronicle Thursday, May 25, 2017

Start saving young to get most out of pension pot

THE drive to encourage workplace pension saving has put many people in charge of their future retirement income.

But how much should you be saving if you want to keep up the kind of lifestyle you're enjoying now?

While everyone's needs are different, consumer group Which? has undertaken research that sheds some light on the issue.

A survey of more than 1,500 retired couples found, on average, retired couples said they needed £18,000 a year to cover household essentials – such as food, utilities, transport and housing costs.

But for a slightly more comfortable lifestyle which allows for extras such as European holidays and leisure activities, they needed an annual income of £26,000.

The consumer group calculates that to generate an annual income of £26,000, a couple would need a defined contribution pot of £210,000 in today's money – alongside their current state pension entitlement.

Based on current retirement ages and state pension entitlements, to generate a £26,000 annual income Which? calculates couples starting saving from scratch need to be saving between them:

:: £131 a month if they start from aged 20
:: £198 a month from 30
:: £338 a month from 40
:: £633 a month from 50

Fancy a "luxurious" retirement? To achieve this, couples need to build a pot of £550,000, the research found.

To build such a pot, couples could need to save between them:

:: £283 a month if they start from aged 20
:: £424 a month from 30
:: £731 a month from 40
:: £1,657 a month from 50

The calculations make certain assumptions – and as such they are an indication of what people might need to save to achieve the sort of lifestyle they expect rather than a precise prescription.

While some of the figures may look a little daunting, they do show why it's a good idea to start the savings habit young – especially if you're hoping to spend your retirement sipping cocktails by a pool.

Encouragingly, the figures also show that even if you're starting to save later in life, it is still at least possible to build up a decent-sized pot.

Which? has a free online guide at which.co.uk/saveforretirement to help people plan their retirement saving. Free guidance is also available to those nearing retirement from the Government-backed Pension Wise service.

So how can you boost your chances of hitting your retirement income target?

According to Kate Smith, head of pensions at Aegon, pension saving should be seen as a habit, not a chore.

She says: "An annual income of £26,000 is achievable provided people start saving early. Savings from both partners also have the added bonus of an employer contribution via their workplace pension twice over.

"Realistically, few people will be in a long-term relationship from the age of 20, so it's important that they take personal responsibility and realise that the buck stops with them when it comes to pension savings.

"The key to building a good retirement pot lies in what you do in the early years to make pension saving a habit and not a chore."

TOP TIPS... TO REACH YOUR RETIREMENT SAVINGS TARGET

Here are some tips from Kate Smith of Aegon:

:: Don't delay. Start saving as early as possible. Make a plan, including all your pensions and savings.

:: Don't opt out of your workplace pension. Save enough to maximise your employer's pension contribution.

:: Work out how much you've saved in pensions and other savings you've targeted for retirement, such as Isas.

:: Get a state pension forecast online - gov.uk/check-state-pension. Make the most of online tools and calculators to work out how much you need to save.

:: Regularly review your plan, your pension and savings accounts. This is especially important for women returning to work from maternity leave and those whose children have reached school age, when nursery and childcare costs are no longer an expense.

:: Consider getting professional financial advice.

NEW CASH MACHINE APP

A cash machine locator app showing where all the Link network's 70,000 ATMs are in the UK has been launched. The app is accessible for visually impaired people and uses voiceover technology and enables people looking for their nearest ATM to filter the results to suit their needs.

A feast for sore eyes – we love our food, but making sure you don't cook too much for a meal is a good way of saving money and reducing waste

Cut down on food waste – and save yourself a packet

Report by Kate Whiting

IF you're guilty of binning leftovers or mouldy old veg from the bottom of the fridge you never got around to cooking, you're not alone.

According to research by Sainsbury's for its Waste Less, Save More campaign, an incredible seven million tonnes of food is wasted by UK households each year, of which 4.2 million tonnes is completely avoidable.

The good news is, by following some simple steps, we can all save money and help save the environment.

Sainsbury's discovered the main reasons for shoppers wasting food and have suggested the following top tips to avoid falling into these traps...

DON'T COOK TOO MUCH

The supermarket found that 41 per cent of people waste because they cook too much. Here's what to do...

:: **Portion control:** Stick to the recommended serving sizes listed on packaging. If you do over-cook, freeze the leftovers for another day.

:: **Give away, don't throw away**: If there is perfectly good food at risk of going in the bin, why not ask your neighbour if they'd like it, or donate it to a food bank? OLIO is a free app that connects neighbours to their local shops so that surplus food can be shared.

:: **Get creative:** Make delicious snacks and even full meals with leftovers you would ordinarily have thrown away. Creating everything from soups to tacos, burritos to biryanis, there are great ways to love your leftovers.

REMEMBER WHAT'S IN YOUR FRIDGE

A quarter of people throw away food because they forget they have it, according to Sainsbury's. So...

:: **Juice it:** Fruit and veg don't have to be thrown away just because they've gone a little soft. Throw fruit into a smoothie, and wilting veg into soups. Or combine both in tasty juices that are super healthy.

:: **Take a shelfie:** Simply photographing the contents of your fridge before you leave the house could stop you overbuying in-store.

BE BEST-BEFORE SAVVY

Sainsbury's found 19 per cent of us are confused by best-before and use-by dates. Here's a reminder...

:: **Use-by:** This date is about safety and the most important date to remember. Foods can be eaten (and most can be frozen) up until the 'use by' date, but not after.

:: **Best-before:** This refers to the quality and taste. The food is most likely safe to eat after this date but may not be at its best for flavour and texture. You can't beat looking, smelling and tasting for a reliable indicator of freshness.

More than half of the country's 7 million tonnes of food waste is avoidable

Lots of fruit and veg goes to waste if not used soon enough

Caddies get filled up with leftovers and unused food

START PLANNING MEALS

Only 29 per cent of people prepare a meal plan. Here's how to make one...

Dedicate 20 minutes of your week to checking what's in the fridge and cupboards, and creating a meal plan for the week ahead.

Choose meals that use similar ingredients to avoid waste. For example, make a chicken and vegetable soup on Monday and use the leftover veg in your shepherd's pie on Thursday.

MANAGE YOUR WASTE

According to Sainsbury's, 28 per cent of people wish they knew more about managing and cooking food.

:: **Use it all:** Often by-products of cooking can be turned into something delicious. For example, use bones from meat for stocks, and cheese rinds to flavour sauces.

:: **Bin responsibly:** If you have a garden, why not get a compost bag for any leftovers and peels, or check with your council if they offer food-waste disposal. Everything from egg shells to scraps left on your plate will then be disposed of in an environmentally-friendly fashion.

The Ticket

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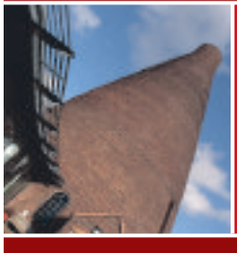

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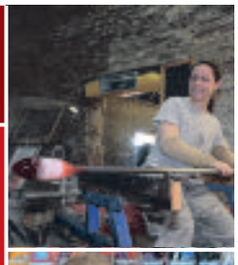

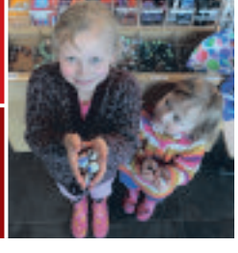

I quick-stepped to Dirty Dancing role

It didn't take Carlie Milner long to agree to star in Dirty Dancing. The all-singing, all-dancing performer was delighted to play Penny Johnson.

And who can blame her. Dirty Dancing, which runs at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre from Monday to June 3, remains one of the nation's favourites.

Exploding with heart-pounding music, breathtaking emotion and sensationally sexy dancing, the film version has been seen by millions across the globe.

The worldwide smash hit tells the classic story of Baby and Johnny, two fiercely independent young spirits from different worlds, who come together in what will be the most challenging and triumphant summer of their lives. Featuring 35 hit songs, including Hungry Eyes, Hey Baby, Do You Love Me? and the heart stopping (I've Had) The Time Of My Life, it remains a true classic.

Carlie says: "It was one very quick chat with agent and we agreed that we'd do it. That was it."

She was formerly with Birmingham Royal Ballet, where she starred in Sleeping Beauty, and she also played in English National Ballet's Swan Lake, at the Royal Albert Hall. Stepping up as Penny Johnson has been a blessing and she's been on the road with it, off and on, since 2014.

"Yes, I started with it a few years ago. I was doing the old production and now we're back with a brand new interpretation of the show. I did the show for a year and a half and then I joined this production and we started rehearsals in June last year.

"Despite doing the show before, it's like doing a whole new show. I've really worked on the part and made it my own. It was a no brainer really."

The response from audiences has been ecstatic and Carlie thinks the musical has the perfect blend of comedy, drama and music to keep people entertained.

"It's a cult classic, it's got a huge following, as does the film, and that lends flavour to the theatre version. It appeals to more than just a theatre goer. You get people of all different ages going. It's lovely and there's the double nostalgia, with the show being set in the 60s but having lots of 80s music. It appeals to a wide audience and I think it will always be that way.

"The thing about Dirty Dancing is that it remains so current. I had the TV on last night and there was an advert and the first thing was the Dirty Dancing steps. It's always on TV. Every couple of months, you'll switch on and it's there. This production is a similar thing. I don't think it will go away. I know every show has to have a rest but then it comes back stronger.

"We had a new choreographer and a new director, new steps and I guess I had a break of six to eight months between shows. It's kind of nice coming back and seeing what else I can bring to it."

Carlie copes well with being away from home and describes herself as a good tourer. She's used to the routine of packing her suitcase each Sunday and hitting the road.

"It's a tough schedule but it's great. You just have to get on with it. You kind of accept that part of it. I'm on the move for a year and get home when I can.

"I like to think I'm pretty disciplined. Not to blow smoke up my own backside but you have to look after yourself and put work before play, if you're feeling tired. The more discipline you have the better. It's such a physical show and is so demanding."

She's looking forward to returning to Birmingham, where she was a student at the BRB. She learned a huge amount from the internationally-renowned troupe.

"BRB is a different world compared to musical theatre, certainly in terms of dance. You learn nothing but professionalism. I really value my time working with those companies at such a young age. It was great. It was invaluable. I feel like I've taken that into the other jobs and it was incredible to be in that.

"And to be in Swan Lake at the Albert Hall, a phenomenal theatre, surrounded by 40 other swans was insane. I'll never forget it. It was absolutely wonderful.

"I started off in ballet school and I wanted to do classical and that's what I did for the first few years. Like a lot of people who go through this, your options change through the years. Four years ago I decided to get involved in musical theatre. It was quite challenging after coming from a classical background.

Carlie fell into the role of Penny with ease, after understudying her character for a year-and-a-half. "It's something that I've always wanted to do, so to be able to call that role my own was great because I had really enjoyed it previously. In the old show I played Penny quite a lot as an understudy because unfortunately the main cast member suffered an injury.

"I'm quite lucky with the fact that Dirty Dancing is heavily dance based but I do really love all the acting as well. If I told myself four years ago that I would be playing Penny on a national tour I wouldn't have believed myself. This is the highlight of my career.

"It really is the film on stage. We throw a little bit extra in there and you have live singing and group singing parts which don't really feature in the film. It's a theatrical twist on the original."

Dirty Dancing – The Classic Story On Stage originally opened at London's Aldwych Theatre in 2006 with a record-breaking advance of £15 million, making it the fastest-ever selling show in West End theatre history. The production became the longest running show in the history of the Aldwych Theatre and played to over two million people during its triumphant five-year run.

It has become a worldwide phenomenon, with productions staged in the USA, Canada, Germany, Australia, the Netherlands, Sweden, South Africa, Hong Kong, Singapore and throughout Europe, consistently breaking box office records.

Spaghetti arms – Carlie plays Penny (far right) in Dirty Dancing

> *It's a tough schedule but it's great. You just have to get on with it*

Recent sell out tours include France, Germany and Australia.

The first ever UK tour of Dirty Dancing – The Classic Story On Stage, launched in 2011 and then returned to the West End in 2013 playing at the Piccadilly Theatre in London, prior to launching a second UK and Ireland tour.

The new production also features Lewis Griffiths, as Johnny Castle. Lewis has had a prolific career in musical theatre, most recently starring as Nick Massi on the UK tour of Jersey Boys. Other roles in UK tours include Ghost and Legally Blonde, and West End credits include Priscilla Queen of the Desert, Rent and Whistle Down the Wind.

It also features Katie Hartland, as Baby Houseman. Katie made her professional musical theatre debut carrying the watermelons as Baby Houseman, having graduated from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in 2015.

The show is set in the summer of 1963, and 17 year-old Frances 'Baby' Houseman is about to learn some major lessons in life as well as a thing or two about dancing. On holiday in New York's Catskill Mountains with her older sister and parents, she shows little interest in the resort activities, and instead discovers her own entertainment when she stumbles across an all-night dance party at the staff quarters.

Mesmerised by the raunchy dance moves and the pounding rhythms, Baby can't wait to be part of the scene, especially when she catches sight of Johnny Castle the resort dance instructor.

A show not to be missed.

● **For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.**

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Rock 'n' roll musical Grease

Grease – the one that you want back on stage

Grease is the word at Birmingham Hippodrome where the latest tour of the much-loved rock 'n' roll musical arrives on Monday.

The show, which runs until June 3, is bringing a special guest for the cameo role of Teen Angel – Jimmy Osmond – who played that part in the West End production.

Tom Parker, formerly of boy band The Wanted, will make his musical theatre debut as Danny Zuko, the role made famous in the movie by the young John Travolta. Danielle Hope, who was Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz at the London Palladium after winning TV's Over The Rainbow, will step into Olivia Newton-John's high heel shoes as Sandy. Danielle was also recently seen in Hippodrome panto Dick Whittington.

The role of wisecracking Rizzo will be played by EastEnders and The Bill star Louisa Lytton, one of the youngest Strictly Come Dancing competitors in 2006.

Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey's musical, featuring such songs as You're The One That I Want, Summer Nights, Greased Lightnin' and Hopelessly Devoted To You, has been choreographed by Arlene Phillips and directed by David Gilmore, who was also at the helm for stage versions of Happy Days and Footloose.

A saucy feel-good romantic musical set in an American high school during the rock 'n' roll era, Grease is one of the most popular shows. This award-winning production opened in the West End in 1993, where it had a six year run, and has toured ever since.

Visit birminghamhippodrome.com or call 0844 338 5000. Grease will also visit Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from November 27 to December 2.

Dance delight from breaks to ballet

Hot on the heels of last weekend's B-Side Hip-Hop Festival in and around Birmingham Hippodrome, the UK's biggest festival of Hip Hop Dance, Breakin' Convention, comes to Birmingham bringing jaw-dropping performances from around the world and around the corner.

On Friday and Saturday, June 2 and 3, at Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Breakin' Convention includes performances from international hip hop dance crews including Soweto Skeleton Movers (from South Africa), Just Dance (South Korea) and all-female crew Tentacle Tribe (Canada).

In addition to the headline international acts, local crews, DJs, graffiti art and freestyle jams will transform The Rep's foyer making Breakin' Convention an experience rather than just a show.

Now in its 14th year, Breakin' Convention has firmly established itself as one of the major highlights on the British dance calendar. It is hosted and curated by UK hip hop pioneer Jonzi D, pictured, who said: "The Birmingham hip hop scene is one of the best in the UK, it's always been hype!"

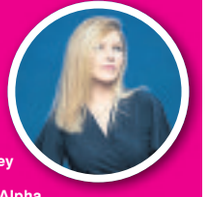
The festival includes the best from the West Midlands including Rhythm Junkiez Dance Company from Sutton Coldfield and Birmingham companies Jigsaw Collective, Broken Silence, Marshon Cadets, plus 2014 UDO world street dance champions Street Dance Academy.

The two-day festival is suitable for all ages and includes B-Totz for under 10. For full details see breakinconvention.com, tickets start from £10, call 0121 236 4455.

Tonight (Friday) and tomorrow the seductive world of Argentine tango is explored in Milonga at Birmingham Hippodrome, in which Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui brings his unique vision to tango with a cast of 17 performers.

Meanwhile, Northern Ballet bring their new production by Daniel de Andrade, based on the heartbreaking story of The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas, to Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on Tuesday and Wednesday plus, for younger audiences, Goldilocks on Wednesday afternoon.

Home inspiration for Saint Etienne



Saint Etienne emerged in 1990 with a gentle danceloor-orientated sound as Britpop exploded all around them. Charting with Join Our Club and You're in a Bad Way, the trio of singer Sarah Cracknell (pictured) with Bob Stanley and Pete Wiggs won fans with the albums Foxbase Alpha, So Tough and Tiger Bay. Five years on from their last album, they return with 16 new songs on Home Counties, released on June 2. They have a gig at Birmingham Town Hall on Sunday, June 4.

Punk and metal rule at Slam Dunk

It's Slam Dunk Saturday this weekend with the rock festival's line-up at Birmingham NEC now in excess of 60 bands.

The Slam Dunk Festival, which is also held at Leeds and Hatfield over the weekend, used to be held at Wolverhampton Civic Halls. It's an annual celebration of punk, ska, emo and metal music. Bands will be performing on eight stages.

Headliners include Enter Shikari – marking ten years since debut album Take To The Skies – plus Bowling for Soup, Neckdeep, Tonight Alive, Against Mel, Memphis May Fire and Nottingham's Area 11.

They will be performing alongside such favourites as Don Broco, Deaf Havana, Beartooth, Japan's Crossfaith, Reel Big Fish, We The Kings and Less Than Jake. See slamdunkmusic.com for the latest.

SATURDAY'S TV MAY 27

CHOICE

Gwendolen Chatfield

Jane Austen: Behind Closed Doors
(BBC2, 9pm)
Historian Lucy Worsley embarks on a road-trip across England to take in some of the places Jane Austen lived in and visited during her lifetime. She aims to demonstrate how Jane's personal experiences influenced the central themes of home and property in her novels, and makes use of detective-work to recreate some of the most important locations that no longer stand. She begins in Stoneleigh Abbey, Warwickshire, retracing a journey that marked one of the many times the Austens veered wildly between wealth and genteel poverty – mirroring the Dashwoods of Sense and Sensibility. Lucy also travels from Jane's birthplace in Steventon, Hampshire, to her brother's grand estate.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Raymond Blanc: How to Cook Well. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Pointless Celebrities. (R) **2.00** The FA Cup Show. **4.00** BBC News. **4.10** Regional Programme. **4.15** MOTD Live: FA Cup Final Build-Up. **5.15** MOTD Live: FA Cup Final. Arsenal v Chelsea (Kick-off 5.30pm).

7.45 Doctor Who. The Doctor, Bill and Nardole find themselves in the middle of a war-zone, as Chinese, Russian and American forces stand poised to clash. At the centre of the field of battle is a 5,000-year-old pyramid, and while there are many problems with the situation presented, the Doctor is concerned with only one – there was no pyramid there yesterday. With the three opposing forces promising mutually assured destruction, and every clock in the world counting down to Earth's ruin, an offer of help arrives in the form of a message from an alien race. To avoid annihilation, humanity must willingly become slaves for their would-be saviours. Sci-fi drama, starring Peter Capaldi and Matt Lucas.

8.30 Who Dares Wins. Nick Knowles challenges two pairs of complete strangers to team up, and battle it out to list as much as they know about a given subject.

9.15 Mrs Brown's Boys. Agnes looks after a robotic baby that has been given to Dermot and Maria to help them prepare for their new arrival, and Cathy develops a crush on her psychology lecturer. (R)

9.45 BBC News; Weather.; National Lottery Update.

10.05 Clique. Holly remains suspicious about the clique, despite now being at its heart, and a climactic encounter during a night out tests friendships – both new and old – to breaking point.

10.50 Clique. Holly worst fears are confirmed, just as she is beginning to settle into her new life in Edinburgh, and tensions mount during a party to celebrate Georgia's achievements at Solasta.

11.35 MOTD: FA Cup Final Highlights. Arsenal v Chelsea. Action from the showpiece match at Wembley Stadium.

12.10 Film: Swingers. (1996) **1.45** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.50** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 Film: City Beneath the Sea. (1970) **7.45** Deborah Kerr: Talking Pictures. (R) **8.20 Film:** The Prisoner of Zenda. (1952) **10.00** Monty Halls' Great Hebridean Escape. (R) **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Great British Menu. (R) **12.30** Great British Menu. (R) **1.00** Great British Menu. (R) **1.30 Film:** Camelot. (1967) Musical, starring Richard Harris. **4.20** Flog It! (R) **5.00** Nature's Miniature Miracles: Natural World. Documentary telling how the world's smallest animals manage to survive, revealing how they have evolved extraordinary skills and achieved mindboggling feats. Hugh Dennis narrates. (R)

6.00 Golf: PGA Championship. Eilidh Barbour presents highlights of the third day of the European Tour's flagship event from Wentworth in Surrey. With commentary by Peter Alliss, Ken Brown and Andrew Cotter.

7.00 Mexico: Earth's Festival of Life. Exploring the wildlife, landscape and culture in three distinct areas of the country. (R)

8.00 RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2017. Coverage of the annual horticultural event, which takes place in the west London district.

9.00 Jane Austen: Behind Closed Doors. Lucy Worsley embarks on a road-trip across England to visit some of the many places that informed the central themes of home and property in Jane Austen's novels.

10.00 Film: Quartet. (2012) Three former opera singers prepare for their annual concert to mark Verdi's birthday and raise funds for their retirement home. However, this year, a famous diva has joined the group, and her history with the others threatens the performance. Comedy drama, directed by Dustin Hoffman and starring Maggie Smith, Billy Connolly, Tom Courtenay, Pauline Collins and Michael Gambon.

11.30 Versailles. William of Orange "tempts" the King to take the field against his Dutch army, so Queen Marie-Therese takes charge while Louis XIV is away at war; (R) Inside Versailles.

12.30 Film: Easy Money. (2010) A student, a fugitive and a Mob enforcer's lives overlap through their involvement in organised crime. Thriller, with Joel Kinnaman, Matias Varela and Dragomir Mrsic. **2.30** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Sooty. (R) **6.35** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Super 4. (R) **7.20** Marvel Avengers Assemble. (R) **7.45** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.10** Ben 10. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** The Home Game. (R) **10.20** Judge Rinder. (R) **11.15** Tipping Point. (R) **12.20** ITV News; Weather. **12.30** Bigheads. (R) **1.30** The Chase. (R) **2.30 Film:** Mission: Impossible. (1996) Action thriller, starring Tom Cruise. **4.35** Catchphrase. (R) **5.20** Britain's Got More Talent.

6.15 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.25 ITV News; Weather.

6.45 Take Me Out. An account manager from Leeds, a housing executive from Belfast, a professional BMX rider from Portsmouth and an IT manager from Exeter try to impress 30 women and win a date.

8.00 Britain's Got Talent. The nationwide talent contest's audition phase draws to a close, as Ant and Den bring out one last batch of would-be stars to perform in front of judges Simon Cowell, Alesha Dixon, David Walliams and Amanda Holden. So far, Amanda, Alesha, Simon, and Ant and Dec have all made use of their Golden Buzzer privileges to send four acts directly through to the live semi-finals, with David remaining true to form and holding back on throwing his support behind any one performance until late in the audition process. Regardless, tonight will see the judges pick one last set of performers to bring the total of shortlisted acts to 35, before the elimination process gets under way with the first live semi-final on Monday.

9.20 The Keith and Paddy Picture Show. Keith Lemon and Paddy McGuinness present their version of Jaws, guest starring Stephen Tompkinson, Myleene Klass and Hank Osasuna.

9.50 Film: Jaws. (1975) A seaside town's police chief has to deal with a giant killer shark preying on tourists. Steven Spielberg's thriller, starring Roy Scheider.

10.50 ITV News; Weather.

11.05 Film: Jaws. (1975) Concluded.

12.25 Jackpot247. **3.00** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.05 Motor Sport: British Rally Championship. **6.30** Monaco Historic Grand Prix 2016. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.20** Frasier. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.25** Frasier. (R) **9.55** Formula 1 Monaco Grand Prix Practice 3 Live. **11.25** Formula 1 Meets Claire Williams. **11.55** Formula 1 Monaco Grand Prix Qualifying Live. **2.30** World's Most Expensive Cars. **3.30** A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. (R) **4.30** Big House, Little House. **5.35** Location, Location, Location. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 The Restoration Man. George Clarke meets retired businessman Bruce Woodall, who 30 years ago started to restore a Georgian gazebo tower on top of Pembroke's medieval city walls – and has finally taken on the challenge of finishing the job. However, he discovers that since his architect drew up the plans, conservation laws have changed, threatening to shut down the project for good. George unravels this local landmark's 500-year-old secrets, finding its place in key chapters in English and Welsh history – but has the gazebo tower's story finally come to an end? (R)

8.00 Walks with My Dog. Ben Fogle takes his Labrador along the banks of the Thames, beginning in Marlow, while broadcaster Emma Kennedy and her maltipoo puppy visit the Lake District. Plus, Helen Skelton and her dog Barney embark on a voyage of discovery in Dumfries and Galloway, on Scotland so-called "secret coast".

9.00 Film: The World's End. (2013) A 40-year-old man who refuses to grow up drags four reluctant childhood friends back to their home town to recreate a pub crawl they attempted in their teens. As they work their way round the 12 local bars, they stumble on a threat to the entire human race. Sci-fi comedy, starring Simon Pegg and Nick Frost.

11.10 Film: Die Hard 2. (1990) A lone cop battles terrorists who have taken over an airport to force the release of a convicted drug baron. Action thriller sequel, starring Bruce Willis and Bonnie Bedelia.

1.25 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **2.20** The Last Leg. (R) **3.15** Hollyoaks. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.10** The Fairly OddParents. (R) **10.45** Dogs Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **11.10** Police Interceptors: Dog Squad. (R) **12.05** Benefits Britain: Life on the Dole. (R) **1.05** Benefits Britain: Life on the Dole. (R) **2.05** Benefits Britain: Life on the Dole. (R) **3.05** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **4.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **5.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R)

6.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. In Staffordshire, the agents chase up a £3,000 deposit owed by a landlord to his tenant, and officers in Birmingham try to recover £25,000 from a nightclub owner for unpaid solicitor fees. Meanwhile, agents Max and Paul are in Surrey as they attempt to collect more than £3,000 owed to a garage after a customer disputed the repairs made to his van. (R)

7.00 Cricket on 5. England v South Africa. Action from the second one-dayer in the three-match series, held at the Ageas Bowl in Southampton, as the sides warmed up for the ICC Champions Trophy. With commentary from Geoffrey Boycott, Simon Hughes, Michael Vaughan, Graeme Smith and Mark Nicholas.

8.00 5 News Weekend.

8.05 NCIS: Los Angeles. Part one of two. The agents investigate when two men are killed at a gun shop, but soon discover one of their colleagues could be at risk.

8.55 NCIS. The team, alongside the FBI and MI6, continues the international manhunt for a disgraced British spy, while a colleague fights for their life in the ICU.

9.50 NCIS: Act of Vengeance. Feature-length episode. The team reels in the wake of the terrorist attack, but tries to avenge Kate's death by collecting as much information as possible on Ari before he does any more damage. Meanwhile, Gibbs learns one of his old flames has been named as the new NCIS director. (R)

11.40 Undercover Benefits Cheat. Paul Connolly goes undercover as a benefits claimant in order to expose fraudsters, beginning with those who claim housing support while subletting.

12.10 SuperCasino. **3.10 Film:** The Punisher. (1989) **4.40** Access. (R) **4.50** House Doctor. (R) **5.15** Wildlife SOS. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Saints and Sinners: Britain's Millennium of Monasteries **8.00** Nature's Great Events **9.00** Hinterland **10.30** Top of the Pops: 1983 **12.00** The Joy of the Bee Gees **1.00** Bee Gees at the BBC and Beyond **2.00** Boogie Fever: A TOTP2 Disco Special **3.30** Close

ITV2
12.10 Britain's Got More Talent **1.10** Take Me Out **2.25** Take Me Out – The Gossip **3.25** You've Been Framed! Gold Unleashed! **4.30 Film:** Space Chimps (2008) **5.30** FYI Daily **5.35 Film:** Space Chimps (2008) **6.10 Film:** Red Riding Hood (2011) **7.10** FYI Daily **7.15 Film:** Red Riding Hood (2011) **8.15** Scorpion **9.20** Britain's Got More Talent **10.20** Celebrity Juice **11.20** Family Guy **12.45** American Dad! **1.15 Film:** Bring It On (2000) **2.15** FYI Daily **2.20 Film:** Bring It On (2000) **3.00** Teleshopping

ITV3
11.50 Jane Eyre **2.05 Film:** Carry On Loving (1970) **3.15** FYI Daily **3.20 Film:** Carry On Loving (1970) **4.00** Lewis **6.00** Rosemary & Thyme **7.00** Midsomer Murders **9.00** Foyle's War **11.10** Law & Order: UK **2.05** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
11.00 The Classic Car Show **12.00** British Touring Car Championship Highlights **1.30** ITV Racing Live from Haydock. Coverage of today's race meetings at Haydock Park, Goodwood and York. **4.30** Pawn Stars **6.00** Storage Wars **7.00** The Sweeney **8.00** Better Late Than Never **9.00 Film:** Gascoigne (2015) **10.05** FYI Daily **10.10 Film:** Gascoigne (2015) **10.55** Premiership Rugby Union **11.55** River Monsters **1.00** Road Racing Series **2.00** Fifth Gear **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
12.00 The Goldbergs **2.30** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **2.40** The Big Bang Theory **6.45 Film:** The Three Musketeers (2011) **9.00 Film:** The A-Team (2010) **11.25** Gogglebox **1.35** Rude Tube **2.35** Tattoo Fixers **3.25** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD

Film4
1.00 Casper (1995) **3.05** Napoleon Dynamite (2004) **4.55** Johnny English (2003) **6.35** Beautiful Creatures (2013) **9.00** The Day After Tomorrow (2004) A climatologist races across America to rescue his son as freak weather conditions cause devastation around the world. Disaster thriller, starring Jake Gyllenhaal. **11.25** Insidious (2010) **1.30** The Haunting in Connecticut (2009) **3.40** Close

SUNDAY'S TV MAY 28

CHOICE

Elisabeth Moss

The Handmaid's Tale (Channel 4, 9pm)
New series. Dystopian drama based on Margaret Atwood's novel about a future American theocracy, in which declining birth rates have led to a new social order, where the few remaining fertile women are kept as slaves to carry children for the regime's leaders. Elisabeth Moss stars as one of these women, who struggles to cope with her repressive existence and the resentment of her owner's wife. Joseph Fiennes, Yvonne Strahovski, Alexis Bledel, Madeline Brewer, Ann Dowd, O-T Fagbenle, Max Minghella, Samira Wiley, Amanda Brugel also star.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **8.25** MOTD: FA Cup Final Highlights. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **2.15** Money for Nothing. (R) **3.00** Flog It! (R) **3.45** Shop Well for Less? (R) **4.45** Points of View. **5.00** Songs of Praise. **5.35** Escape to the Country. (R)

6.05 BBC News.

6.20 Regional Programme.

6.30 Countryfile. A round-up of reports on spring, including the return of tulips to Lincolnshire's farmlands, an influx of migrating jellyfish in Cornwall and a visit to Exeter's livestock market.

7.30 Antiques Roadshow. Fiona Bruce presents the show from an 18th-century cotton mill on the banks of the River Clyde, where a painting is a reminder of its owner's uncomfortable family secret.

8.30 Damilola, Our Loved Boy. In November 2000, 10-year-old schoolboy Damilola Taylor was attacked and fatally wounded in Peckham, south London, a death that shocked the nation. This feature-length drama reveals the personal stories behind the headlines, exploring Damilola's journey from Lagos to London, and showing how Richard and Gloria Taylor coped with their personal lives as well as the pressure of the media as they fought for justice for the killing of their son. Babou Ceesay, Wunmi Mosaku and Sammy Kamara star, with Robert Pugh. (R)

10.00 BBC News.

10.25 Regional Programme.

10.35 Room 101 – Extra Storage. Extended version of the comedy panel show in which Frank Skinner invites Claudia Winkleman, John Humphrys and Russell Kane to compete for the chance of banishing their pet hates. (R)

11.15 Murder in Successville. Comedy starring Tom Davis as DI Sleet, who enlists the help of a genuine famous sidekick to solve the latest high-profile murder. Last in the series.

11.45 The Women's Football Show. A look at the biggest issues in the women's game.

12.20 Film: Lucky Them. (2013) **1.50** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.55** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 Around the World in 80 Gardens. (R) **7.15** The Instant Gardener. (R) **8.00** The Beechgrove Garden. **8.30** Countryfile. (R) **9.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.00** Great British Menu. (R) **11.30** Great British Menu. (R) **12.00** Live Athletics: Great Manchester Run. Coverage of the 15th staging of the event. **2.30** Athletics: Diamond League Highlights. **3.30** Rowing: European Championships Highlights. **5.00** Athletics: Great Manchester Run Highlights.

6.00 Golf: PGA Championship. Eilidh Barbour presents highlights of the final day of the European Tour's flagship event from Wentworth in Surrey. With commentary by Peter Alliss, Ken Brown and Andrew Cotter.

7.00 Dragons' Den. Evan Davis presents the business ideas contest, as regular panelists Deborah Meaden, Peter Jones, Sarah Willingham, Touker Suleyman and Nick Jenkins consider the profit-making potential of wearable maps, interference-free guitar cables and keys for manhole covers. However, this last scheme comes from an entrepreneur who has previously come to the edge of bankruptcy. (R)

8.00 The Life Swap Adventure. New series. Volunteers trade places with people from other countries, hoping to gain a new outlook on life when they return. John, an overworked fire officer from Essex who worries he does not spend enough time with his children and grandchildren, swaps homes with a farmer from Malawi who envies Western technology and fears for his family's future.

9.00 Paul Hollywood's Big Continental Road Trip. New series. he Bake Off judge takes a series of road trips across different countries in Europe, driving some of the most famous cars made in each nation he visits. The first episode comes from Italy, where Paul takes a six-day journey with a different car for each day, beginning in Rome where he is joined by Strictly Come Dancing's Bruno Tonioli.

10.00 White Gold. (R)

10.30 Film: The Damned United. (2009) Fact-based drama.

12.00 Film: Easy Money II. (2012) **1.35** Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **2.35** Holby City. (R) **3.35** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Sooty. (R) **6.35** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Super 4. (R) **7.20** Marvel Avengers Assemble. (R) **7.45** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.10** Ben 10. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Britain's Best Walks with Julia Bradbury. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **10.55** Judge Rinder. (R) **11.55** Judge Rinder. (R) **1.00** ITV News; Weather. **1.05** Tipping Point. (R) **2.05** The Chase. (R) **3.05** Britain's Got Talent. (R) **4.15 Film:** The Spy Who Loved Me. (1977) James Bond spy adventure, starring Roger Moore.

6.40 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.45 ITV News; Weather.

7.00 Bigheads. Jason Manford hosts the comedy game show in which the winning contestants from the past five episodes return to compete in a final series of bizarre physical challenges while wearing giant model heads of celebrities, with a convertible car as the grand prize. With commentary from Jenny Powell and Kriss Akabusi. Last in the series.

8.00 The Durrells. The family's maid goes into labour, so Leslie sends Larry to fetch Dr Petrides. However, he finds the doctor occupied, as he is in the middle of delivering his own wife's baby. Hugh has a proposition for a startled Leonora, which she promises to think about – but an altercation with Vasilia nearly ends in tragedy for them both. Donald attacks a rival suitor for Margo – who finds herself quite delighted by the thought of two men fighting over her – while Theo and Gerry make a discovery at the otters' den. Last in the series.

9.00 Grantchester. Sidney resolves to resign from the church so he can marry Amanda. However, a child abduction and Geordie's family problems make him see how much he is needed. Last in the series.

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.20 Peston on Sunday. Political magazine. (R)

11.20 Premiership Rugby Union.

12.15 Lethal Weapon. (R) **1.00** Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

7.30 Frasier. (R) **8.00** Frasier. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Sunday Brunch. **12.00** Formula 1 Monaco Grand Prix Live Build-Up. Previewing the sixth round of the season. **12.35** Formula 1 Monaco Grand Prix Live. Coverage of the sixth round of the season (Start-time 1.00pm). **3.10** Formula 1 Monaco Grand Prix Live Reaction. A review of the sixth round of the season. **4.30** World's Most Expensive Cars. **5.30** George Clarke's Old House, New Home. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 The Supervet. Noel Fitzpatrick and his team return to provide more cutting-edge animal care. The professor's first patient is labradoodle Mitzi, who has been hit by a car – and Noel's biggest concern is that she may have suffered nerve damage, leaving her owners fearing the worst. Options are limited for 10-month-old German pointer Hector, who is struggling to walk – he must undergo spinal surgery or face the prospect of being put to sleep, while a Leonberger with a cancerous leg undergoes an operation to remove the tumour. (R)

8.00 Cabins in the Wild with Dick Strawbridge. Dick Strawbridge and Will Hardie visit a cabin inspired by a national coal pit and a modernist design made entirely from slate. Plus, a look at an airship-inspired cabin in Sussex.

9.00 The Handmaid's Tale. New series. Dystopian drama based on Margaret Atwood's novel about a future American theocracy, starring Elisabeth Moss as a woman who is kept as a slave purely for breeding.

10.15 Gogglebox. Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R)

11.15 Micky Flanagan: Back in the Game. The comedian performs to his home crowd at London's Hackney Empire, regaling his audience with tales of middle age, marriage and a man's prerogative. (R)

12.50 Arnie's Greatest Ever Stunts. The actor examines the most spectacular stunts committed to film, ranking Hollywood set-pieces alongside standalone feats such as Felix Baumgartner's free fall to Earth. (R) **2.15 Film:** Blue Ruin. (2014) **3.50** Location, Location, Location. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Milkshake! Monkey. **6.05** Mr Men. (R) **6.15** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.20** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.25** Wissper. (R) **6.35** Paw Patro. (R) **6.45** Bob the Builder. (R) **7.00** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.10** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.15** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.20** Paw Patrol. **7.45** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.05** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.25** Wissper. (R) **8.35** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.50** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.05** Little Princess. (R) **9.20** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.30** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.40** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.50** The Fairly OddParents. (R) **10.25** The Gadget Show. (R) **11.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.15** Police Interceptors: Under Attack. (R) **2.15 Film:** Open Season 3. (2010) Animated adventure, with the voice of Matthew J Munn. **3.45 Film:** Pudsey the Dog: The Movie. (2014) Family comedy, starring Jessica Hynes. **5.30** Most Shocking Talent Show Moments. (R)

7.55 5 News Weekend.

8.00 Holidays Make You Laugh Out Loud. Iain Lee narrates a compilation of internet videos involving holidays, including a daily sprint for the sunbeds and a man who thought he was filming Las Vegas but actually had the camera pointed at himself. Featuring contributions from comedians Dave Spikey, Zoe Lyons and David Mills.

9.00 When Kids TV Goes Horribly Wrong. Andi Peters narrates a compilation of classic children's TV mishaps, featuring contributions from presenters including Sarah Greene, Sally James, Pat Sharp, Gaz Top, Toby Anstis, as well as John Leeson, the actor who played Rainbow's giant teddy bear Bungle, and who remembers his terrifying original costume. Plus, a campfire burning out of control in the Blue Peter studio and some inappropriate adverts.

12.00 Football on 5: The Play-offs. **12.25** Dumb Drivers: Caught in the Act. Footage of motorists and motorcyclists getting into all sorts of scrapes. (R) **1.15** SuperCasino. Live interactive gaming. **3.10** Top 20 Funniest. A countdown of the funniest video clips in America. (R) **3.55** Access. (R) **4.00** World's Most Pampered Pets. Documentary about people who spoil their pets. (R) **4.50** House Doctor. (R) **5.15** Wildlife SOS. (R) **5.40** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 Perfect Pianists at the BBC **8.00** Radio 1's Big Weekend: Highlights **9.10** Kings of Leon Live at Radio 1's Big Weekend **10.00** Arena: American Epic **11.00** Blues at the BBC **12.00** The Man Who Brought the Blues to Britain: Big Bill Broonzy **1.00** Jago: A Life Underwater **1.50** Nature's Great Events **2.50** Engineering Giants: Jumbo Jet Strip-Down **3.50** Close

ITV2

11.50 Take Me Out **1.05 Film:** Richie Rich (1994) **2.10** FYI Daily **2.15 Film:** Richie Rich (1994) **2.55 Film:** Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) **3.55** FYI Daily **4.00 Film:** Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) **4.40** Britain's Got Talent **6.00** Britain's Got More Talent **7.00 Film:** Despicable Me (2010) **8.00** FYI Daily **8.05 Film:** Despicable Me (2010) **9.00** Take Me Out – The Gossip **10.00** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.30** The Cleveland Show **1.25** Through the Keyhole **2.20** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

12.15 Film: Carry On Loving (1970) **1.15** FYI Daily **1.20 Film:** Carry On Loving (1970) **2.10 Film:** Columbo: The Most Crucial Game (1972) **3.45** Foyle's War **6.00** Midsomer Murders **8.00** Royal Stories **9.00** Kate: The Making of a Modern Queen **10.05** Law & Order: UK **12.05** Wire in the Blood **3.25** May the Best House Win **5.05** In Loving Memory **5.30** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4

9.00 Film: Last Man Standing (1996) **10.00** FYI Daily **10.05 Film:** Last Man Standing (1996) **11.05 Film:** United 93 (2006) **12.05** FYI Daily **12.10 Film:** United 93 (2006) **1.10** Premiership Rugby Union **2.15** Tommy Cooper **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

1.30 Brooklyn Nine-Nine **2.00** New Girl **2.30** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **2.50 Film:** A Turtle's Tale: Sammy's Adventures (2010) **4.30 Film:** Mr Popper's Penguins (2011) **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00** Rude Tube **11.00** 8 Out of 10 Cats **11.55** Tattoo Fixers **2.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **2.50** Rude Tube **3.40** Hollyoaks

Film4

11.00 Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules (2011) **1.00** Thunderbirds Are Go! (1966) **2.55** The Dark Crystal (1982) **4.40** Small Soldiers (1998) **6.45** The Secret Life of Walter Mitty (2013) **9.00** 2 Guns (2013) **11.10** Odd Thomas (2013) **1.00** A Girl at My Door (2014) **3.30** Close

PICK OF THE WEEK

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Song for Marion, BBC2, 10.30pm
A grouchy old man has always been dismissive of his wife's role in the unconventional local choir. When she is diagnosed with a terminal illness and is no longer able to sing, he reluctantly agrees to take her place, a decision that dramatically changes his life and helps him through the hard times to come. Comedy drama, with Terence Stamp, Gemma Arterton, Vanessa Redgrave and Christopher Eccleston. (2012)

TUESDAY
Diana, Channel 5, 11.05pm
Fact-based drama following the Princess of Wales in the last two years of her life. Under constant media scrutiny, she finds a new public role for herself as a patron of humanitarian causes, while secretly conducting a passionate affair with a Pakistani heart surgeon. Starring Naomi Watts and Naveen Andrews. (2013)

Sliding Doors, Friday, BBC1, 11.25pm

WEDNESDAY
Saved from Sorrow: Mysterious Grace, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A retired police officer, despondent over the deaths of his family, meets a mysterious woman who through her personal stories gives him a reason to rethink what is most important to him. Drama, starring Joey Lawrence, Robin Riker, Muse Watson and Catalina Rodriguez. (2016)

THURSDAY
Alone in the Wild: Deadly Survival, Channel 5, 3.15pm
After a plane crash leaves them stranded in the Canadian wilderness, young siblings Hannah and Zach battle all that nature has to throw at them. Alongside trusty dog Chinook, the duo face bears, wolves and a raging wildfire in their bid to find safety. Family drama, starring Natasha Henstridge. (2013)

FRIDAY
Sliding Doors, BBC1, 11.25pm
A London woman's entire future hinges on a seemingly minor but pivotal moment. Comedy drama, presenting two versions of a character's life, starring Gwyneth Paltrow and John Hannah. (1998)

Feeling the strain of a life in the media spotlight

Decades before Donald Trump blurred the lines between politics and pop culture, the Kennedys were America's obsession.

They have everything that the tabloids and gossip writers could want in a family – politics, extraordinary wealth and copious scandals, which makes it easy to see why people continue to crave as much information about them as they can get their hands on.

Of course, there have been countless movies and TV series made about their lives over the years, including, notably, 2016's biographical film Jackie, which earned Natalie Portman an Oscar nomination for Best Actress.

However, not all depictions of the clan have been as well received.

Back in 2011, TV mini-series The Kennedys was slammed even before it aired for taking a sensationalist approach to the story of JFK (Greg Kinnear), his wife Jackie (Katie Holmes), brother Robert (Barry Pepper) and patriarch Joseph (Tom Wilkinson).

Nevertheless, it was a ratings success for broadcaster ReelzChannel, and some critics even came round – Pepper won an Emmy for his performance.

Tonight, the show's sequel The Kennedys: Decline and Fall is premiered on UK TV.

The drama (which was called The Kennedys – After Camelot in the US) is based on a book by J Randy Taraborrelli and picks up in the wake of Bobby's 1968 assassination and goes all the way through to 1994.

Jackie (again played by Holmes, who also directed part of it) is again in mourning, and sniping breaks out between her and the newly widowed Ethel (Kristin Booth).

Robert's brother Ted (the almost unrecognisable Matthew Perry, complete with fake ears, a fake nose and wavy-haired wig) is seen delivering part of the famous eulogy for Bobby.

Indeed, much of the drama focuses on Ted and revisits the awful death of a young woman named Mary Jo Kopechne, in 1969.

Ted, then a US Senator for Massachusetts, had been at a party with Kopechne and others on the island of Chappaquiddick, on Martha's Vineyard.

Kennedy was behind the wheel in his car with Kopechne when he accidentally drove off a bridge into a pond. Ted escaped, but Kopechne stayed trapped inside the car.

His conduct after the incident, reports of his drinking, women-chasing and controversy surrounding Kopechne's death essentially doomed Kennedy's chances of becoming President himself.

Throughout the drama, we see Ted struggling with the pressure to live up to his brothers' legacies and with his own personal inadequacies.

The second storyline in Decline and Fall has Jackie questioning her tenuous position within the Kennedy family, while also being wooed by and wedding Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis (Alexander Siddig).

The Kennedys: Decline and Fall, Monday, Channel 5, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
May v Corbyn Live: The Battle for Number 10
Channel 4, 8.30pm
A lot has been made about Theresa May's decision not to participate in a live debate with Jeremy Corbyn and the other leaders of the UK's main political parties ahead of next week's General Election. However, the Prime Minister is not in for an easy ride tonight. In this show, broadcast simultaneously on Channel 4 and Sky News, May and Corbyn will both face questions from the audience via Sky News Political Editor Faisal Islam. Then, in between each Q&A segment, both of the leaders will be interviewed by former Newsnight presenter Jeremy Paxman. If you miss tonight's show, May and Corbyn will be seen on our screens again in a BBC Question Time Special, presented by David Dimbleby, on Friday.

TUESDAY
Grayson Perry: Divided Britain
Channel 4, 9pm
You can't beat a Grayson Perry documentary - and that was something nobody thought they would ever hear when he began making programmes for Channel 4. After all, he was a potter, not a film-maker, but he's done the broadcaster proud, devising numerous enthralling shows on a range of subjects – and this promises to be just as good as its predecessors. In January, he asked viewers to contribute to the making of two pots by asking them their thoughts on Brexit. These were submitted via Twitter, and now we're getting an opportunity to find out how Perry has used them. Not that he's been keeping it a secret - his social media followers have been treated to sneak previews over the weeks, but now we'll be seeing them for the first time in all their glory.

WEDNESDAY
Fargo
Channel 4, 10pm
The Coen brothers couldn't possibly have imagined that their Oscar-nominated drama set in the snowy wastes of Minnesota would go on to spawn three TV series, but thank goodness it has because the small screen version of Fargo has been a real treat. Each run features new stories and characters, and the latest stars Ewan McGregor in the dual role of brothers Ray and Emmit Stussy. The latter is the state's Parking Lot King, a slick, self-made property mogul and family man; Ray, meanwhile, is a different kettle of fish altogether. Pot-bellied and balding, he's a parole officer with a chip on his shoulder about the hand in life he's been dealt and blames his sibling for all his problems. There is no love lost between the brothers, and their rivalry is about to wreak havoc in their small town.

Frank Skinner on Muhammad Ali, Thursday, BBC1, 9pm

THURSDAY
Frank Skinner on Muhammad Ali
BBC1, 9pm
Last year, millions of fans around the world mourned the passing of Muhammad Ali whose fame and charisma transcended boxing. One of those who grieved him was comedian Frank Skinner, who now gets a chance to pay tribute to his idol with this documentary. Skinner travels across the UK and the US to visit some of the key locations and people in Ali's life, from the next-door neighbour from Louisville, Kentucky, who witnessed the teenager boxer's dedication to his craft, to a bare-knuckle fighter on an Oxfordshire council estate who became one of his dearest friends. Along the way, Skinner learns more about some of the lesser known chapters in Ali's story and finds out just why he became an icon of the civil rights movement and arguably the greatest sporting hero of the 20th-century.

FRIDAY
Question Time Leaders' Special
BBC1, 8.30pm
With less than a week to go to the General Election, time is running out for the country's politicians to get their points and policies across to the British people. In this programme, which could turn out to be one of the defining moments of the campaign, Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn will feature on the same prime-time edition of Question Time in York. The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition won't be on screen at the same time, but they will be quizzed by the same audience – and David Dimbleby – consecutively. The veteran host will also be in Edinburgh on Sunday, where he will be chairing a second special with Liberal Democrat Tim Farron and the SNP's Nicola Sturgeon.

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5/6	5	Warners Thornsby Hall
16/6	4	Paignton/Torquay (more dates)
26/6	5	Babbacombe
26/6	5	Weston Super Mare (more dates)
01/7	8	Weymouth (more dates)
3/7	5	Scarborough
9/7	6	Durham and Northumbria
14/7	5	Falmouth
15/7	5	Eastbourne (more dates)
16/7	5	Isle of Wight (more dates)
19/7	5	Llandudno (more dates)
23/7	7	Scotland Fort William
30/7	5	Bournemouth (more dates)
31/7	5	North Devon Bideford
31/7	5	Isle of Scilly

DATE	DAYS	
4/8	4	Looe
7/8	5	Ilfracombe
11/8	3	Liverpool and Merseyside
22/8	4	Sidmouth (more dates)
26/8	6	Ireland The Giants Causeway
1/9	5	English Lakes
3/9	5	Suffolk Village
15/9	3	Harrogate Flower Show
29/9	5	Isle of Man
10/10	8	Channel Islands
21/10	3	Blackpool
17/11	3	Murder Mystery
2/12	2	Bath Christmas Market
9/12	3	Thursford Spectacular

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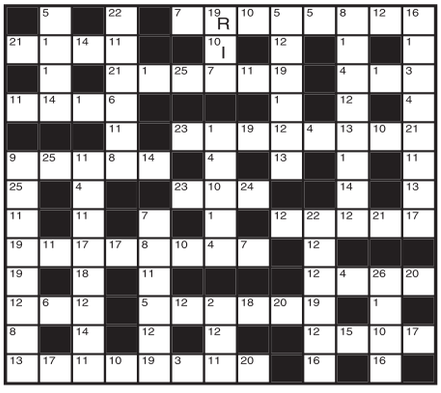
BRAIN GYM

No.431

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



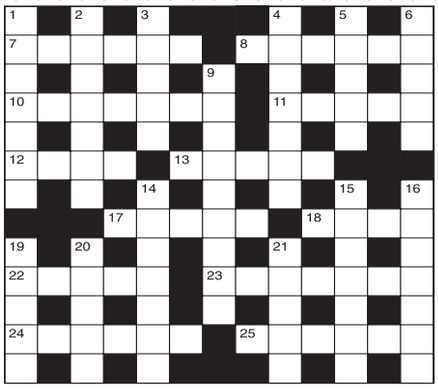
1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19 R
7	20
8	21
9	22
10 I	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
K	Z	P	E	W	L	F	V	H	I	J	A	Q
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
M	C	U	S	Y	D	O	T	N	G	B	R	X

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

7. Freedom from anxiety shown by some cartographers (6)
8. Give the fellow a blend of tea (6)
10. I've lost various flowers (7)
11. Particular positions that will produce spectacles, we hear (5)
12. This tide occurs at dusk (4)
13. Footwear establishing a record in the Civil Service! (5)
17. A steel fastener put back for the creeper (5)
18 & 20Dn. Suffer twinges but work with great care (4,5)
22. Father put back the top card quickly (5)
23. Came out in spots (7)
24. Used by the artist when camping (6)
25. Dislodged from a high perch, one hears (6)

Down

1. Foresight? (7)
2. Everything still outstanding is not banned (7)
3. Revolutionary film about the capital of Bulgaria (5)
4. So Grace redesigned the bouquet (7)
5. See 14 Down
6. Lets a minimum change take place (5)
9. Needs a pal for a seaside walk (9)
14 & 5Dn. Generous celebration for political group (7,5)
15. Whaling equipment - an instrument with a ring on (7)
16 & 21Dn. Chief illumination for pre-eminent personage (7,5)
19. It's not plain imagination (5)
20. See 18 Across
21. See 16 Down

Quick Clues:

Across

7. Gateway (6)
8. Roar (6)
10. To storm (7)
11. Domestic task (5)
12. Too (4)
13. Blithe (5)
17. Angry (5)
18. Measure (4)
22. Water lily (5)
23. Upshot (7)
24. Coincide (6)
25. Brandy (6)

Down

1. Ascetic (7)
2. Assure (7)
3. Mortal (5)
4. Quicksilver (7)
5. Blossom (5)
6. Proprietor (5)
9. Desertion (9)
14. Off-hand (7)
15. Tell (7)
16. Protection (7)
19. Remiss (5)
20. Expiate (5)
21. Bench (5)

Sudoku

4			9	6	3			5
	3		7		8		1	
	9				4			
		2		3		7		
9			5	1				8
		6		7		2	3	
7								
	8		6		7		4	
5			2	4	1			7

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

5	9	7	8	3	2	4	6	1
2	1	3	6	4	9	5	7	8
6	8	4	7	1	5	9	3	2
9	6	1	4	8	3	2	5	7
7	3	5	2	9	6	8	1	4
8	4	2	1	5	7	3	9	6
3	2	8	9	6	1	7	4	5
1	7	9	5	2	4	6	8	3
4	5	6	3	7	8	1	2	9

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Stall; 4 Ash pits; 8 Inmates; 9 Tripe; 10 Mite; 11 Relation; 13 Dolt; 14 Deal; 16 Gestured; 17 Idle; 20 Sward; 21 Get into; 22 Set free; 23 Great. Down: 1 Seismologists; 2 Admit; 3 Lute; 4 Answer; 5 Hot water; 6 Initial; 7 Stern-foremost; 12 Flounder; 13 Distant; 15 Beagle; 18 Dense; 19 Stag.
QUICK - Across: 1 Decor; 4 Painter; 8 Flatter; 9 Charm; 10 Ewer; 11 Horseman; 13 Earn; 14 Foul; 16 Transfer; 17 Glee; 20 Agate; 21 Titanic; 22 Erector; 23 Press.
Down: 1 Differentiate; 2 Chase; 3 Rota; 4 Parson; 5 Incision; 6 Trammel; 7 Reminiscences; 12 Prospect; 13 Emanate; 15 Letter; 18 Lance; 19 Stop.

Quiz

1. Of which African country is Brazzaville the capital?
2. Which Greek letter represents the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter?
3. Which Norwegian composer had the middle name Hagerup?
4. With which sport is the English Leander Club associated?
5. Which French author wrote The Human Comedy series of novels?
6. What type of animal is a porcupine?
7. Which poet laureate wrote The Fair Penitent?
8. Membership of which body allows MPs to be called Right Honourable?
9. What nationality was Ivor Novello?
10. Who directed the controversial film Natural Born Killers?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Raven; 2 Darwin; 3 Tin; 4 Thistle; 5 Grozny; 6 11 Downing Street; 7 The Brown Bomber; 8 Muslin; 9 Northwest Passage; 10 Tony award.

Niner: TINDERBOX

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

639972 gives a country,
7681245 gives a second country,
74572 gives a third country.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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Dino diner is a roaring success

When our daughter arrived on this Earth, the small print said she'd be into dinosaurs.

That's what we were led to believe when she was handed to us at the hospital. Cradling our little girl, my other half hummed the theme tune to Jurassic Park into her ear, in the hope that his lifelong love affair with the Steven Spielberg blockbuster would be passed down to her subconsciously.

However, 15 months on, and Edie has yet to spark an interest in pre-historic beasts. And her lack of enthusiasm was never more evident as we walked around West Midland Safari Park's excellent Land of the Living Dinosaurs. So, in a last ditch attempt to spark some pre-historic magic, we headed over to the Dino Diner for some lunch because if anything's going to inspire our kid, it's food.

The entrance to the Dino Diner

Sandwich filler – served with salad and crisps

The diner interior at West Midland Safari Park

TROPICAL

Entering through a giant bone carcass, it has a pre-historic cave-like interior with moody lighting and tropical plants. The only thing missing was the Jurassic Park soundtrack. Or even some T-Rex. Get It On, I say.

Welcomed by a sunny member of staff in safari-style gear, we were shown to a table and invited to order food and drinks at the counter. After a bit of a false start due to a fire alarm and the restaurant being evacuated, we reconvened to decide on our food choices.

The menu makes an amusing read. Carnivores are well-catered for; there's Rex's Lunch – a lamb shank in red wine sauce with mashed potatoes – or a Predator Platter comprising half a chicken, rack of ribs and sides.

Herbivores can tuck into the Bronto Balti – a vegan sweet potato balti, while skinniovres (dieters) can opt for the Raptor Salad of piri piri chicken, mixed leaves, sweet potato and quinoa. Litte people have loads of choice too – there's not a Bernard Matthews breaded turkey dinosaur in sight, as options include sausage, mash and peas, and pasta bolognese. There's please-all side orders too, like onion rings and cheesy dough balls.

In the interest of giving the menu a fair run we ordered a raft of food including the barbecue pulled pork-loaded nachos, the raptor salad and volcanic skillet fajita. Oh, and a diddy dino sweet potato balti with rice for the little one on the basis that we fancied trying it too. Our meals arrived promptly and looked freshly-cooked and appealing. The bill came to just over £36. Most disappointing in terms of value for money was the kid's sweet potato balti which, at £6, came in a meagre portion of brownish mush on top of plain white rice. Edie was as interested in it as she was the dinosaur trail.

She was rather enamoured by the barbecue pulled pork-topped nachos, though. In fact, it proved a hit with us all; we attacked it like a pack of predatory pterodactyl at a buffalo meat buffet.

The fajitas were well presented with a separate skillet of sizzling chicken breast, mixed peppers and onions in a sauce as spiky as a stegosaurus's spine, and a pile of soft tortilla wraps. The raptor salad provided some much-needed crunch, packed with a few unusual ingredients such as sugar snap peas and slices of sweet red pepper. Two skewers of chicken thigh meat drizzled in a sweet chilli sauce were moist and pleasantly charred and accompanied by red pepper hummus and tortilla wrap. We polished off most of the food despite ordering far too much.

Our little girl might have been unimpressed with the 65- million-year-old dinosaurs but the food was a roaring success.

By Emily Bridgewater

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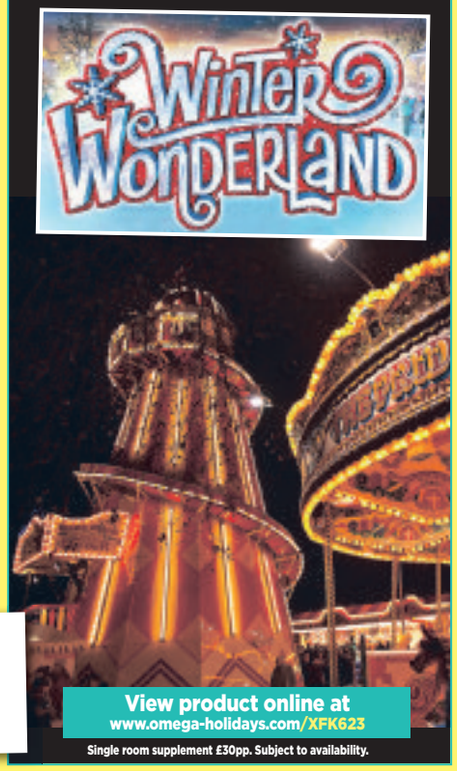

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PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO HOME BUYING AND LETTING

Three-storey home is packed full of charm and character

An impressive Edwardian three-storey semi-detached residence packed with charm and character, 70 Dagger Lane in West Bromwich comes with a granny annexe to the rear.

It is newly available to rent through Love Your Postcode at £1,400 per calender month.

Having many original features, this lovely property lies in a much sought-after residential area near Dartmouth Park.

A deceptively spacious family home, with central heating, it has an entrance hall with a staircase off down to a cellar, a lounge, a fitted kitchen, a utility room, a bathroom/WC, four bedrooms and a granny annexe and a pretty rear garden plus a block paved forecourt to the front.

The granny annexe comprises a bedroom – which was originally the breakfast room – an open plan kitchen/lounge/diner and shower room/WC.

On the ground floor is the entrance hall, lounge, kitchen and utility room. On the first floor can be found three bedrooms and a bathroom/WC.

On the second floor is bedroom four and the granny annexe is positioned to the rear.

In more detail the lounge has wooden flooring and a stunning feature fireplace and bay window with leaded lights to the top area, and beautiful original ceiling cornicing.

Two of the spacious bedrooms feature highly attractive light-coloured wooden flooring, as well as an original feature ceiling beam.

The garden has been professionally hard landscaped, including block paved areas flanked by raised borders.

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Three-bed end terrace property has been improved

Beautifully presented and much improved, this three-bedroomed end terrace house in Park Road, Bearwood, is for sale through Robert Oulsnam at £240,000 with no upward chain.

BEARWOOD

£240,000

Features include two reception rooms, a modern-style kitchen, three bedrooms, a first floor bathroom and an additional ground floor shower room. In full, it has a vestibule, entrance hallway, reception room one with a bay window, reception room two, an inner hallway, WC, a kitchen, rear vestibule, utility, shower room, three bedrooms, a bathroom and a store cupboard. In more detail the brand new kitchen features white contemporary units and contrasting working surfaces, splash-back tiling, a cooker and hob and extractor hood and wood-effect flooring.

The entrance hall has attractive tiled flooring. Both reception rooms have new grey carpeting. Call 0121 429 9986 or visit www.oulsnam.net

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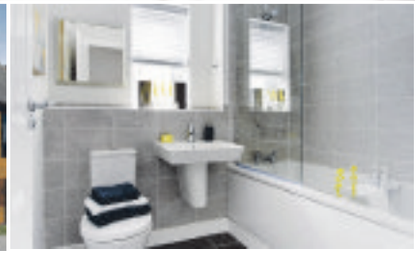

CGI of 2 bedroom Haycroft. Photographs of typical Kier showhome interiors. Elevations and finishes may vary. *Help to buy available upon request subject to terms and conditions. †Calls cost 2p per minute plus your phone company's access charge.

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Black phone in black case.
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Pictures and videos are very sentimental due to family bereavement therefore a reward offered is worth more than the phone.
Please call 07977 779939.

1 Family

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3 Home & Services

furniture

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It is an offence under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to carry out gas work in the UK without being on the Gas Safe Register.

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4 Pets & Animals

equestrian corner

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guns & dogs

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Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

pets corner

NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:
1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

5 Business & Farming

business opportunities

READERS are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering into any obligations.

business directory

commercial premises

UNITS AND OFFICE SPACE to let in Oldbury, West Bromwich and Walsall. Easy Terms. Ashmore Properties 0121 520 5318.

6 Property

accommodation to let

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NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments/contracts.

WALSALL 3 bedroom houses and rooms in shared house to let, rooms £70 inc most bills. 07825 581676.

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properties wanted

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mobile homes

PARK HOME 40 X 12FT
On a small residential park at Yarnfield, near Stone, Staffs for the over 50's without resident children or dogs. Mains gas central heating, Lounge, kitchen, bathroom with shower, 2 bedrooms, in good condition.
£55,000
01785 760464.

overseas property

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7 Jobs

engineering

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full time - general

Accessible Transport Group is the leading provider of accessible transport services in the West Midlands. We have 8 depots, operate 600 vehicles and employ over 950 staff for our Ring and Ride service, home-to-school contracts and Igo bus routes.

Most importantly, we make a difference to peoples lives every day by providing a safe, reliable door-to-door service for those who are unable to use conventional public transport.

Ring & Ride Drivers (Wednesbury)
Your role will involve providing assisted transport services to individuals with mobility issues within the local area. A clean driving license with Category D or D1is essential. Our in-house training is exceptional and you will gain NVQ Level 2 qualification in Road Passenger Vehicle Driving.

Part Time Home-to-school drivers (Wednesbury)
You'll provide a vital role to passengers with special needs who depend on our services to get from home to school. Category D or D1 on your driving licence is essential and we will train you to NVQ Level 2 in Road Passenger Vehicle Driving.

Depot Supervisors (Frankley)
These are first line managerial positions providing leadership to shift operations while working as part of a close team ensuring operational excellence and high quality customer service.

All roles are subject to reference, a medical and DBS checks.

To apply for one of these positions, please call us on:
0121 327 8128 or email:
thahura.khanom@atgroup.org.uk
Closing date for applications is 1st June 2017.

ATG
Accessible Transport Group is an equal opportunities employer

SBBS Building & Scaffolding Ltd
SBBS Building & Scaffolding Ltd, Wednesbury require
SCAFFOLDERS, SCAFFOLDING TRAINEES & LABOURERS
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manufacturing

EXPERIENCED ALUMINIUM GRAVITY DIE CASTER and **DRESSER** required for foundry company based in West Bromwich. Good rate of pay. 0121 525 0000.

part time - general

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Email:
enquiries@baronukltd.com

8 Motoring

cars under £1500

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BMW 316SE SALOON
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BMW 325 DIESEL
Automatic
1995
Good condition.
£750.
07864 842076.

BMW 523I
1997, 85,000 miles, abs, auto, electric windows, fsh, long MoT, sunroof, alloys, leather interior, four new tyres, any inspection, drives beautiful.
£650 ono.
07425 136504.

FORD MONDEO
02 reg, 2.0 petrol automatic, full MoT,
numerous things done on car, including inlet manifold (common fault) rear sub frame and break pipes beneath, rear callipers and wheel bearings, front suspension arms, hand break cable, plus more.
blue, same owner from last 10 years, well looked after.
£700.
07533 497669.

LOOK
VAUXHALL ZAFIA
2004, 122,500 miles, grey, electric windows, air bag, electric mirrors, air con, long MoT, central locking, pas, alloys, CD or part exchange for small diesel.
£700 ono.
07902 389544.

cars over £1500

BMW X1
2011, 81,000 miles, black, electric windows, fsh, long MoT, one owner, diesel, alloys, 177BHP, sports seats.
£9,500.
07734 956636.

BARGAIN
CITROEN BERLINGO MULITSPACE
1.6 DIESEL
2009 5dr, 62,000 miles
MoT Jan 2018, red.
£3,950 ono.
07932 084639.

ClassifiedAds

LANDROVER DISCOVERY TD5 GS

Silver, 7 seats, 52 Reg., good condition for age, 122,000 miles, 12 months MoT, tow bar.

£2,600 o.n.o.

07984 207513.

NISSAN NOTE 1.4S

Blue, petrol manual, 2007, 2 owners from new, 53k, long MoT, economical/reliable.

Bargain £1,750 ono.

07477 9544207 Great Wyrley.

IDEAL FIRST CAR

VAUXHALL CORSA EXCITE

2011, 3dr, MoT to November, fsh, silver, 42,000 miles from new, immaculate condition.

£3,850 o.n.o.

07742 904992.

VAUXHALL CORSA STING 1.4 ECOFLEX

2016, attractive, sporty and as new. Guaranteed 4500 miles only. 1 lady owner.

Full warranty 2019. Cruise control. Bluetooth. Genuine sale reason.

£6795.

07943 347562.

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VW EOS FSi 2.0 CONVERTIBLE

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commercial vehicles

MUST BE SEEN

FORD TRANSIT

Double cab tipper, T350

09 reg, 5 tonne ram,

11 months MoT.

Very good condition.

£6,000 ovno.

07836 568903.

vehicles wanted

CROWN MOTORS guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549849, buyer will call.

spares & accessories

crash / repairs / resprays

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OLDBURY 0121 552 3133

9 Local Information

public & legal notices

ROBERT ANTHONY CAMMIES (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any person having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of Church Rose Nursing Home Payton Road Handsworth Birmingham formerly of 6 Wheaton Vale Handsworth Wood Birmingham B20 1AJ, who died on 27/01/2017, is required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned at the address below, on or before 04/08/2017, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.
The Executor of the Estate of the late Robert Anthony Cammies
PO Box 370 Stevenage SG1 9BB T502290

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
Regeneration and Planning
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

I hereby give notice that Sandwell Council has received the following applications under the planning acts which it is required to give public notice for the reason given at the beginning of each group of applications.

This is a major application.

DC/17/60597	Mr David Molland FCC Environment UK Ltd	FCC Environment Edwin Richards Quarry Portway Road Rowley Regis B65 9DN	Variation of condition 1 of planning permission DC/14/57744. Proposed restoration and re-location of landfill gas utilisation plant.

This application is for a Listed Building within a Conservation Area.

DC/17/60575	Baron Famain Limited	First And Second Floors 17 Church Square Oldbury B69 4DX	Proposed change of use from offices to 4 No. 2bed apartments with rear terrace to second floor.

This is a major application.

DC/17/60465	Mr Pradip Dhamecha Empire Partners	Birmingham Cash And Carry James Watt Industrial Park Steel Bright Road Smethwick B66 2NW	Demolition of existing ancillary office and front lean to extension and proposed extensions to existing wholesale cash and carry warehouse to provide additional storage, new toilets, staff welfare and front canopy.

The application may affect the character or appearance of a conservation area.

DC/17/60549	Sandwell MBC – Corporate Landlord	320 - 324 High Street West Bromwich B70 8DT	Demolition of gas room, council offices, print room and underground toilets and erection of boundary fence.

Members of the public may inspect copies of these applications at Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 3DE (between 8.00a.m. and 5.30p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 9.00a.m. and 5.30p.m. Wednesday and 8.00a.m. to 5p.m. Friday) or via the Council's Public Access website (www.sandwell.gov.uk).

Anyone who wishes to make representations about these applications can do so via the website, or should write to the Council at the above address within 21 days (and 21 days for Listed Building or Conservation Area consent) of the date of this advertisement quoting the application reference number.

MR NICK BUBALO, Director – Regeneration and Planning

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Windmill Lane, Smethwick) (Temporary One-Way Operation No.3) Order 2017, intends to temporarily prohibit any vehicles from proceeding along Windmill Lane, Smethwick between the entrance to the Windmills Shopping Centre and Cape Hill other than in a northerly direction. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 04/06/17, effective from 04/06/17. Alternative route for south bound vehicles via Grove Lane and Cape Hill. Purpose – work to a T-Mobile phone mast by Blade Access.

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Woods Lane, Cradley Heath) (Temporary Road Closure) Order 2017, has made an Order to temporarily prohibit any vehicles from proceeding along Woods Lane, Cradley Heath at the point of its junction with Forge Lane.
The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 04/06/17 effective from 03/06/17. Traffic will be diverted via Cradley Road, Chester Road and vice-versa. Purpose – new elecricity connection on Lower High Street.

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES

For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to
Marie Hogg on 01902 713146
or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk
(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

GOODS VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENCE

RMR Birmingham Ltd of 51 Mayfield Road, Dudley DY1 4DU is applying for a licence to use 11/12 Anne Road, Smethwick B66 2NZ as operating centre for THREE goods vehicles and THREE trailers.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds LS9 6NF stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's Office.

Dated: May 25, 2017

10 Personals

personal

ATTRACTIVE lonely Female seeking broadminded males within a 20 mile radius. 01902 489 181.

FRIENDLESS

MALE

aged 58, seeking special friend, any nationality, for companionship, days out, cinema etc.

All replies answered.

Box Number P20810 ,

Express and Star,

Queen Street,

Wolverhampton,

WV1 1ES.

LADY, MID 70'S

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Photo appreciated and returned.

Box Number P20806,
Express and Star,
Queen Street,
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sports clubs

CS COLTS TRIALS

We will be holding trials to recruit U16's to form a brand new Sunday Team playing in the Walsall Junior Youth League.

Sunday 4th June, 2017.
Cheslyn Hay Leisure Centre, Saredon Road, Walsall, WS6 7JQ. 2pm-4pm.

We are looking for talented players in all positions. You will be playing on 3G surface so no metal studs allowed. All players should wear shin pads.

To book a trial email name, date of birth and position to
cscoltsu16@outlook.com
Call 07484 650507 for info.

Father's Day
MESSAGE
SATURDAY JUNE 17

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Send to: Father's Day Greetings, Classifieds, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1ES or call into your local Shropshire Star office. Deadline for messages is 11am, Friday, June 16, 2017.

Express & Star

Sandwell Chronicle Thursday, May 25, 2017

The Mercedes-Benz E-Class is one of the safest and most advanced cars in its category

Subtle styling is added to Mercedes core values of pace and elegance

By John Griffiths

It has space and comfort in abundance combined with a a raft of the latest technology – plus a powerful but efficient engine.

Add to that sublime ride comfort and you can see why the latest Mercedes-Benz E-Class has driven off with so many awards, including the UK's Car of the Year, Company Car of the Year and Best Executive Car awards. It won praise from the Car of the Year jury as one of the safest and most advanced cars in its category.

The test car was the E350 estate, powered by a six cylinder, 3.0 litre turbo diesel engine, in sporty AMG Line trim with a list price of just over £48,000. It combines that essential Mercedes ambience of calm and luxury, but with the AMG styling adding subtle contemporary features such as carbon fibre and brushed aluminium to complement the aircraft-like instrument panel. It includes one of the largest, clearest info/control colour screens in the business.

It's particularly attractive at night, when the subtle blue mood lighting illuminates the driver and passenger positions without impacting on your night vision. This with the car's leather seats and cossetting ride, creates an impressive blend of with advanced safety technology and driver aids.

The attention to detail is equally impressive, like the large split screen reversing camera which gives wide, clear views even at night. Or the blind spot monitoring – a red triangle

Inside the car is an ambience of calm and luxury

appears in the wing mirror as another vehicle enters the blind spot, but only if you operate the indicator at that moment, signalling to pull out, do you get an audible alarm as well.

The parking brake automatically releases as soon as you press the starter button, while one finger on the column lever is enough to selection forward or reverse (or 'park' when you stop). There are up/down 'paddles, too, but the transmission is so smooth and responsive I only felt the need to use them to downchange for extra engine braking on steep inclines.

These are two of the 'little' things which add up to a lot. There are more complex driver aids too, such as speed limiter, adaptive cruise control and a system which recognises road signs and automatically limits your speed to the posted limit. Such things are important – if you want to avoid points and a big fine – in a car which almost conceals its powerful nature, so smooth is its progress.

Suspension settings are adjustable from comfort to dynamic, but for such a big car it feels stable through the twisty bits at any sensible speed and it simply glides along motorways.

And it is a big car: It seats five in comfort with up to 1,820 litres of cargo space thanks to split/fold rear seats. Head and elbow room in the rear are best in class, despite the lower roofline which gives the estate a sleeker, sportier appearance and has, no doubt, improved the car's aerodynamic efficiency, bringing benefits in noise levels and fuel efficiency.

The official fuel average is 48.7mpg, which I came almost surprisngly close to matching in real world driving. The CO2 rating is a competitive 151g/km.

The most popular E-Class Estates, though, are likely to be the E200 and E220d. The first costs under £40,000 in the same AMG Line trim and is a model of efficiency for the company car driver – 67.3mpg and 109g/km of CO2, The E220 costs £41,000 and boasts the same economy figures.

Coming soon will be the performance option, with the full AMG treatment – a 3.0 litre V6 bi-turbo turning out 401bhp.

All E-Class cars and estates are comprehensively equipped, and offer the space and technology which makes them a serious rival for upmarket SUVs.

The new versions bring subtle, contemporary styling to add to the core Mercedes values of pace and elegance.

THE DUDLEY MOTOR COMPANY "REAL" SALE

REAL CARS THAT DO EXIST AT REALLY RIDICULOUS PRICES

£500 Finance Deposit Allowance on selected vehicles - £500 minimum trade-in allowance on all vehicles
Finance available on every vehicle in stock (subject to status, T&Cs apply)

64 Cascada 2.0 CDTi, SE Convertible. Massive Reduction!! ..... Only £11,995

Only 2 left at this price
New "17" Reg Corsa 1.4 Sting. Red-White, Delivery Miles, Going Fast.....£8,995

66 Corsa Energy 1400. Only 1,500 miles!! Save over £7,000 on List Price,..... Only £7,995

64 Corsa 1.3 CDTi Ecoflex Excite. 5-dr, 22,500 miles WAS£8,995 .....NOW £6,995

65 Corsa VXR 1.6T. Only 7,000 miles, Save over £7,000 on New Price, Only.....£11,995

15/65 VAUXHALL INSIGNIA CDTi, Diesel Hatchback SRi 5-dr, VX Line Navigation, White, 10,000 miles £13,995
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13/63 MERCEDES A-CLASS 200 CDi Red, 43,000 miles £13,995
16/16 VAUXHALL ASTRA SRi NAV 1.6 CDTi 5-dr, White, Sat Nav, One Owner.....£13,495
15/65 VAUXHALL CORSA VXR 1.6 Turbo 3-dr, White, 15,000 miles £13,495
15/15 FORD FOCUS TITANIUM 1.0 5-dr, EcoBoost, Grey, 7,000 miles.....SOLD
15/65 VAUXHALL MOKKA 1.6 PETROL SE 2WD Black, 14,200 miles £11,995
15/15 RENAULT CAPTUR DYNAMIQUE Diesel, Black, White Roof, 14,000 miles. £10,995
14/14 VAUXHALL CORSA VXR 1.6T Arden Blue, 24,000 miles £9,995
12/62 CITROEN GRAND PICASSO MPV Diesel, Auto, 7 Seats, Black, 19,000 miles.....£9,995
16/66 FORD KA (New Model) 5-dr, White, DAB, Air Con, 1,400 miles.....£8,995
15/65 VAUXHALL CORSA 1.4 EXCITE 3-dr, Black, 9,000 miles £7,995
12/12 FORD FIESTA 1.4 TITANIUM 5-dr, Auto, 26,000 miles, White £7,495
10/10 SEAT EXEO ESTATE SPORT CR TDi Red, 61,000 miles.....£7,450
15/65 VAUXHALL VIVA SE AC, 5-dr, Blue, 11,000 miles.....£6,995
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U-13s high jump winner Jolyon Davis, of Wolverhampton & Bilston AC

High jump judges get out the measuring tape

Competitors warm up before the start of the championships

Steve Hollis, Tamworth, competes in the men's javelin

Records tumble as championship returns to city

Birchfield Harriers' Archie England in the u-13s javelin

Long jumper Isabelle Kelly, aged 15, for Cannock & Stafford

SPORTING FEATURE

By Clare Butler

"To welcome it back in our 50th year was very special. It was wonderful. There were many great performances."

RECORDS were shattered as more than 300 athletes descended on Wolverhampton for the Staffordshire County Track and Field Championships.

For the first time in almost 30 years, Aldersley Stadium played host to an event which sees the region's best go head-to-head.

Host club Wolverhampton & Bilston watched three of its junior stars set new records en route to victory – in the year the club celebrates its 50th birthday. Jolyon Davies, in the under-13 high jump, Molly Walsh, in the junior women's hammer (4kg) and Phoebe Baggott in the under-15 girls hammer (3kg) all went higher and further than any athletes in those category before.

Club president Mary Harding said: "It has not been held here for many years and usually would be held at Stoke or Cannock, so to welcome it back in our 50th year was very special.

"It was wonderful to be able to bring it back. There were many great performances."

Davies, who also took victory in the u-13 shot competition, achieved a height of 1.51m in the high jump, which set a new record in the category.

Walsh meanwhile set a new record in junior women's hammer with a distance of 53.15m, while Baggott threw 56.43m in the u-15s girls' hammer.

A busy day of action featured athletes from clubs including Tipton Harriers, Stone Master Marathoners, Cannock & Stafford and Dudley & Stourbridge Harriers.

Tipton enjoyed early success thanks to Alexia Bennett-Cordy, who won the u-15 75m hurdles in 11.7 seconds.

Cannock & Stafford's Amy Pye showed her versatility with victory in both the u-17 80m hurdles and 300m, before club-mates Chloe Wilde and Natalie Ainge won the women's junior and senior 400m races respectively, Wilde with a new championship record time of 64.8 seconds.

Travis Christie gave the home club something to celebrate, coming home ahead of the field in the men's senior 400m, while Cannock's strong afternoon continued with a one-two in the men's u-17 800m final as Joshua Ward led home team-mate Bill Chesters.

Wolverhampton & Bilston took the top three positions in the u-15 girls 800m with Aliya Westwood finishing in front of Lucy Semple and Jessica Moore and then proceeded to dominate the 1500m races at u-15 level, with Alfie Oliver winning the men's and Ella Semple the girls.

The sprints saw Cannock & Stafford's Chloe Lindop lead home the field in the junior women's 100m, while Derrion Thompson won the senior race – she also won the senior 200m event.

Wolverhampton & Bilston's Alexander James Nwenwo ran 11.4 seconds to win the men's senior 100m. Clubmate Donovan James took the 200m race in 23.1 seconds.

A distance of 5.24m was enough for Wolverhampton & Bilston's Sophie Worrall to win the women's senior long jump.

Cannock & Stafford athletes impressed in the javelin, with Rebecca Scott taking victory in the senior event and Bethan Rees the junior. Emma Douras of Dudley & Stourbridge won the senior high jump competition.

Alexia Bennett-Cordy, for Tipton, in the 80m hurdles

Rutter roars home to show true quality

BRIERLY Hill race Michael Rutter rolled back the years, demonstrating why he remains one of the world's greatest road racers by securing his 14th North West 200 win.

The victory moved Rutter, at the age of 45, to third on the all-time winners list at the famous North Irish triangular circuit, sandwiched between late, greats Joey Dunlop and his brother Robert.

He started the week in superb form, taking pole for the two Superbike races on Saturday – lapping the course at 122.345mph, his fastest ever around the 8.9-mile circuit – and was second on the grid for the opening Superstock and Supertwin races on the Thursday.

The Bathams/SMT Racing BMW rider would also eventually go on to secure two stunning second-place finishes and a third, which, added to his win, meant he had been on the podium in four out of his six races.

The results meant Rutter moved up to an astonishing 31 podiums, which has only been bettered by Alastair Seeley.

Rutter now heads to Donington Park for round four of the National Superstock 1000 Championship, this weekend, May 27-28, before making the trip across the Irish Sea for the Isle of Man TT races.

Service in memory of rugby club stalwart

A SERVICE of thanksgiving will be held next week for Stourbridge rugby stalwart John Jeavons-Fellows following his death at the age of 78.

Described as a 'leading light' in the Lions for the past 60 years, the popular official passed away peacefully in his sleep last Tuesday.

A former pupil of King Edward Grammar School, Jeavons-Fellows began playing for Stour's first team aged 18. At 19 he organised the club's first ever tour and was later appointed captain. After hanging up his boots, Jeavons-Fellows continued to work to improve the club.

He masterminded various stages of Stourbridge's development and helped provide the clubhouse that is currently in place at Bridgnorth Road. He was also keen for Stour to have a profile in the national game with his work ensuring Stourbridge became the training venue for England's Grand Slam winning team of 1980.

He also enjoyed roles as a rugby administrator with Worcestershire & Herefordshire and The North Midlands RFU. In 1997 he was also part of the British Lions management team for their tour to South Africa.

The service takes place at St Mary's. Old Swinford, at 2pm on June 2, and afterwards at Stourbridge Rugby Club.

Aces rally round for hospice fundraiser

CYCLE speedway side Wednesfield Aces are on track for a night of fun and fundraising later this year.

The charity night in aid of Compton Hospice will see 16 riders competing in five heats each in a handicap formula. The big night will be under the floodlights on Friday, September 15 at the club's Ashmore Park venue, hosted by Signal 107DJ Scott Lyons who will call the riders home.

Each participant is expected to raise £50 and there will be a collection bucket and a raffle on the evening. Everyone taking part will take home an award and the overall winner will take home the Steph Clarke Challenge Shield.

Mrs Clarke died in November 2016 at the same time as Wednesfield was enjoying its new Christmas lights – she had been the driving force behind its fundraising. She had been involved in several community projects including the Aces, Hands on Wednesfield and volunteered at the Ashmore Community Centre as well as running photography classes and working full-time as a social media trainer. Steph and her husband James founded the community website wv11.co.uk

Sport

Region's young athletes leap into record books
Page 39

Ace Hancock races in to meet fans

GREG Hancock, one of Cradley Heath's all-time greats, will be back in the West Midlands to meet fans in July.

The reigning world champion, aged 46, started his professional career at the old Dudley Wood Stadium in 1989 but no longer races in the UK and splits his time between Sweden and California.

But on Thursday July 20 he will be on stage at the Cleveland Arms sports pub in Wolverhampton when fans will hear stories from his career, thoughts on this season and plans for the future.

Greg Hancock

Tickets are £12 standard or £30 VIP, to include early entry, buffet, priority seating and a picture with Hancock signed on the night. Doors open at 7pm for an 8pm start – but VIP doors open at 6pm.

Tickets are available from clevelandarms.com via paypal, on 01902 451021 or the Cradley club shop on racenights.

Meanwhile, current Cradley hero Danny Ayres is facing up to another Bank Holiday dash. Ayres takes his place in the Heathens side for their attractive Monday night National League battle with Belle Vue at Wolverhampton. But in the afternoon he's riding for Premiership Leicester against Rye House.

Heathens follow Wolverhampton's fixture with Poole, which gets under way at 6pm. Normal Wolverhampton admission prices apply – Cradley season ticket holders can gain entry for £5 and there will be a turnstile open for the Heathens meeting only from 7.15 approximately.

Heathens beat Buxton on Sunday to go top of the league. They head to Lakeside on Sunday (3pm).

Triathletes test their strength at home and abroad

FOUR Black Country triathletes took on the legendary Ironman Lanzarote which comprised a 2.4-mile sea swim, 112-mile bike and a 26.2-mile run. All finished well within the 18-hour cut off time.

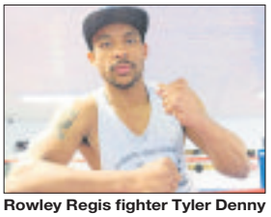
In Sankt Wendel, Germany on Sunday, Paul Rogers and Robert Kennard represented Great Britain in the Powerman European Middle Distance Duathlon Championships in the 50-54 age group, with a 10km run, 60km bike then another 10km run. Rogers finished third in age group, collecting a bronze medal.

In Nottingham, all BCT athletes finished in fantastic times in the Outlaw Half, a 1,900m open water swim, 56-mile bike and a 13.1-mile run.

Mark Anslow took on the Slateman Triathlon in Swowdonia, a 1,000m lake swim, a 51km bike ride and an 11km off road trail run. Reece Ashfield was first in age group and seventh overall in the Sprint Triathlon in Southport.

Adults and juniors raced in the Phoenix Sprint Tri at Ragley Hall, Warwickshire, and the Telford Tinman Sprint Tri, Super Sprint Tri and Wrekin Aquathlon at Wrekin College.

Denny up for British challenge fight



Rowley Regis fighter Tyler Denny

UNBEATEN Rowley Regis fighter Tyler Denny will contest the British Challenge middleweight title with Mike Byles next month with the winner likely to land a Midlands title shot.

Denny headlines the pro boxing show called 'Ruthless Rising' at the Venue in Dudley on Friday June 9.

Nicknamed 'Ruthless,' the 25-year-old steps to eight rounds for the first time after coming through six at the same venue last time out,

Boxing

when he overcame William Warburton on points.

Byles, 29, and boxing out of Coventry, has twice been due to challenge for the area crown against then-champion Craig Cunningham but the fights didn't happen, due to respective injuries.

He'll see the scalp of Denny as a route back to contention and a strap to claim before resuming his hunt for the now-vacant Midlands honours.

The under-card will provide four-round action for Walsall Wood's Shaun Cooper, aka 'The Scorpion', another hometown hero, 30-year-old 'Minefield' Les Byfield, Brummie Kane Baker and Leicester fighter CJ Challenger.

Tickets are £35 and £50 ringside with waitress service. Call 07976 283 157 or contact any of the home corner boxers on Facebook.

CUP RUN STILL VITAL – PULIS

BAGGIES boss Tony Pulis says he would rather reach an FA Cup final and finish 14th in the league than stay in the top half year on year.

Albion finished in the top half of the Premier League for only the third time, but a 2-1 defeat to Swansea on the final day meant they slipped from eighth to tenth.

Pulis has often been labelled a 'survival specialist' and his 40-point mantra at the start of the season is designed to keep teams up.

His record in cup competitions over the past two seasons has infuriated Albion fans, who have watched their team bow out to lower league opposition in three out of four competitions.

But Pulis insists the cups are important. He said: "If you said to me we'd finish 14th and get to an FA Cup final then I would take that and I think the supporters would take it.

"If you said to me we'd finish 14th and get into Europe by hook or by crook or some other way I think I'd take that as well and I think the supporters would as well.

Forsaken

"At Stoke we had two great seasons with those competitions and the supporters enjoyed it so much that I think they would have forsaken a top-10 spot to experience that.

"If you can do both, brilliant, but if you can't I would love the club to have a great cup run or have the chance of gplaying in Europe."

After a top half finish, Pulis admitted Albion may have to spend big this summer just to stand still in next season's Premier League. A run of nine defeats in the final 12 games left Pulis admitting his squad requires plenty of surgery.

The Baggies boss is in China to meet owner Guochuan Lai with the transfer budget top of the agenda.

Pulis said: "I think it's going to cost more money every year to improve. But you have to get the right players, they have to be the right characters and the right players.

"The important thing is they have to be players who are going to be in your starting XI and that moves everything forward. We've done that over the last couple of years and if we can do that again this summer it will improve us again."

Martial art students' medal haul

The Moose Martial Arts Academy representatives who tasted success in Walsall

YOUNGSTERS tasted success in a martial arts competition in Walsall.

Children from the Moose Martial Arts Academy, located at the Moose Family Centre on Woodward Street, West Bromwich, competed at the Aiwakai Championships at Walsall College. The team academy youngsters excelled as they picked up 13 medals in total.

Chief instructor Shannon Parsons was delighted with the success and feels it was a great experience for all of the children involved. She said: "We got a lot of medals and there were lots of parents there that were supporting their kids. We had about a month-and-a-half to prepare and we were practising two or three times a week. The kids are really happy and really confident."

The hard work put in by Shannon, and mother Kellyanne Parsons who deals with the admin side of the club, could bring even more rewards in future.

"We should be involved in the CEWKA Championships at Worcester University in July," said Shannon. "Then, along with myself, there are two students – Abbie Mansell and Ruman Rai – awaiting European Championship selection. They take place in Sardinia in October."

Mansell, 14, and Rai, 11, both participated at Walsall College. Mansell picked up a bronze.

Student on the ball for rugby club

AN international student is on the ball after signing for Wednesbury Rugby Club.

Wolverhampton University student Stanley Tafadzwa Zvidi, aged 21, from Zimbabwe, is on the International Foundation Year at the International Academy based in Priorslee Hall at the Telford Innovation Campus.

A keen rugby player, he plays for Mutare Sports Club in Zimbabwe and has been playing rugby since the age of nine.

After contacting the club, manager Neil Hainse invited him to a training session – and he was successfully picked for the squad. He even scored a try in his first match against Essington.

Zvidi said: "I'm a big fan of the game and wanted to spend some time playing in England while I was studying so being picked by a local team is really exciting and rewarding for me."

Hainse said: "He was so polite it was like a breath of fresh air. We definitely unearthed a gem when Stanley came along.

"He's not just a quality player on the field but the way he conducts himself off the field is second to none. He is a credit to himself, his family and the university. He naturally shows the core values of our sport – respect, teamwork, discipline and sportsmanship."

All-rounder Foster ends WBD hopes

ED Foster enjoyed a good all-round day as Shrewsbury moved up to fourth in the Birmingham League Premier Division with a 27-run victory over West Bromwich Dartmouth.

In a rain-affected clash at Sandwell Park, the visitors triumphed courtesy of the Duckworth/Lewis method.

After being reduced to 45 overs per side and then further cut by 10, the visitors reached 164-7 after being put in.

Foster top scored with 40, then took 3-20 as Dartmouth, chasing a revised target of 169, were dismissed for 14. Brinder Phagura top scored with an unbeaten 32, Henry Blofield claimed 4-17.

Stimpson injury woe

OLDBURY'S Jodie Stimpson has suffered an injury setback that will keep her out of the World Triathlon Series in Leeds and World Cup in Madrid.

She posted on Twitter she had suffered a stress fracture in her lower leg during training, which had set her back a 'few weeks'. I'm gutted because it's my favourite race of the year," she said.

★★★

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